world FILM news

AND TELEVISION PROGRESS

TRUTH BY RADIO **BERNARD SHAW**

THE GENIUS OF PETER LORRE **GRAHAM GREENE**

I TALK TO YOU **STEPHEN KING-HALL**

BRITISH SCRIPTS HORRIFY **SYDNEY HORLER**

FILM NEWS FROM RUSSIA

MONTHLY 1S. IULY

Mr. THERM

takes pleasure in announcing

4 NEW FILMS

OF SOCIAL IMPORTANCE

These new and unusual films, ready in the Autumn, will illustrate some of the needs and developments of contemporary Britain.

DIET AND NUTRITION—"Not enough to Eat?" A film to bring alive one of the most pressing problems of to-day—the fact that 50% of the people of this country are exposed to the dangers of malnutrition. Professor Julian Huxley speaks the commentary. The film reveals in striking form the gravity and extent of the problem. Other experts, dieticians, scientists and eminent public men, come into the film to expose the facts or to outline the work that can be and is being done to improve the health of the nation.

A REVIEW OF PROGRESS IN ENGLAND TO-DAY

—in industry, housing and the home. We are moving towards better working conditions, healthier and more comfortable homes. The film shows how applied science is easing life for men and women alike. It takes us from Sheffield to the Cotswolds; from Wythenshawe to the Great West Road; it visits housing estates in town and country; it shows the beginning of a new England.

A FILM ABOUT COOKING

This is a big step towards good nutrition. Two famous chefs show the art of cooking simple things. One prepares a meal such as you yourself could produce at home. Another reveals many of those secret ways of doing ordinary things which are known as chefs' tips and are never found in cookery books. And it's not just straight cookery —a humorist gets into the kitchen with the chef!

GETTING INTO HOT WATER

People don't realise just what trouble and annoyance is caused in every household where there is not enough hot water. Mr. Therm makes his first appearance as a star on the screen, and solves all their difficulties with his new water heaters. This is a sensible film about a real problem, but cheerfulness and music keep breaking in.

★ *The Gas Light and Coke Company will gladly arrange a complimentary showing of the programme to any society in its own area which can provide a suitable and reasonably numerous audience, and a hall. In the rest of England, all those interested, should approach their own Gas Undertaking, through whose courtesy it may be possible to arrange a showing.*

THE GAS LIGHT & COKE COMPANY
HORSEFERRY ROAD, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1
Victoria 8100

DENHAM STUDIOS

THE SOURCE OF QUALITY FILMS

'AN HONEST JOB OF FILM-MAKING...'

*THE first advertising films were so chockful of advertising and so star-studded with managing directors' daughters, that our little industry made a wretched beginning. Exhibitors put up with films that would have made a quota quickie look like an 'epic.' Then their audiences complained—and advertising films had to improve or get off the screen. In many ways this was a blessing. It made the exhibitors super-suspicious of advertising films. It made the audiences super-critical. Here was a chance for anyone willing to take the production of advertising films seriously. Publicity Films Ltd. saw this opportunity and, on the simple principle of 'Good films—as good as the rest of the programme,' we have built up the largest and most self-contained advertising film organisation in Europe. We passed the experimental stage long ago. Our researches are continued at our own expense—*not *with our clients' films. We have settled down to produce films that entertain, amuse and educate—with just the right tincture of publicity. We have a personnel of unusual brilliance, producing films that reach cinemas where advertising films have previously been refused screen space. If you would like to inspect our studios or attend one of our trade shows, please write to us.*

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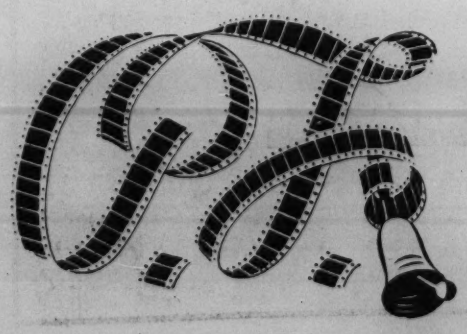
PRUDENTIAL
and many others



Publicity Films Ltd

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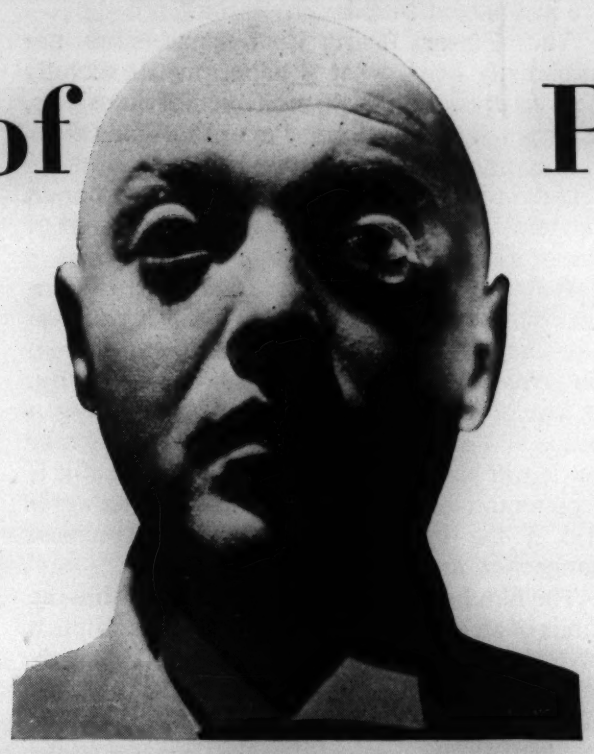
world FILM news

AND TELEVISION PROGRESS
(INCORPORATING CINEMA QUARTERLY)

FOURTH NUMBER | PRICE: ONE SHILLING | JULY 1936

The Genius of Peter Lorre



By GRAHAM GREENE

IT WAS IN Fritz Lang's *M* that Peter Lorre first captured attention, captured it with horrifying vividness as a child murderer. Nobody who saw that film could fail to realise that he might be watching a great actor; might be, because the filmgoer learns caution, because he needs more than one film to tell how much credit is due to the director, because he has been deceived often by a lucky part into believing that a Scarlet Empress is a Blue Angel.

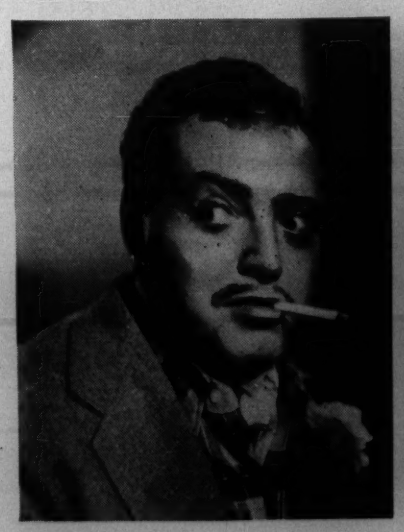
But we were right when we thought there was more than a brilliant melodramatic director behind Lorre. There was nothing of the bogey, the lighted turnip, the Karloff about his performance: I still remember the expression of despairing tenderness he turned on his small victim, the hopeless struggle in his face against a habit he could not break.

He exhibited the same sympathetic grasp of a psychological "case" in his third film, the rather inferior melodrama of Karl Freund's, *The Hands of Orlac*. He acted the part of the depraved surgeon Gogol who grafts the hands of a guillotined murderer on to the smashed stumps of his rival. A part you would have said of cheap Grand Guignol horror, something to frighten children, and a reading of the script would not have altered your view. It was to Lorre alone we owed the goodness, the tenderness of the vicious man. Those marble pupils in the pasty spherical head are like the eye-pieces of a microscope through which you can watch the tangled mind laid flat on the slide: love and lust, nobility and perversity, hatred of itself and despair jumping out at you from the jelly. His very features are metaphysical.

Lorre has run the usual course, from Germany to America and then to England, but in his case it is not the chart of a rising and then falling reputation. He has never failed, although he has never appeared in a good film since *M*. His nearest approach to failure was in Hitchcock's *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. He was given a perfunctory Peter the Painter part, but the director was too proud of his little melodramatic tricks to be interested in character.

Lorre—perhaps it is a misfortune—can do almost anything. He is a genius who sometimes gets his finest effects independently of his director (as I have said there is nothing in the script to explain his Gogol, the seriousness he introduced into the trivial film), but he is also a thoroughly reliable repertory actor, and so in his last film, Hitchcock's deplorable *Secret Agent*, he made a great success of a humorous 'character' part. There was no doubt there about his humour and the gusto with which he acted, and Hitchcock deserves some credit for developing the hint of comic powers observable in Sternberg's glossy popular *Crime and Punishment*, when as Raskolnikov he bated his sister's pompous suitor. It was a cheap little piece of comic relief, but Lorre got from it every possible laugh.

But that is not the Lorre one most wants to see: better Gogol a thousand times, and I have a horrible fear that film directors will find it easier to follow in Hitchcock's steps and provide Lorre with humorous character parts than discover stories to suit his powerful genius, his overpowering sense of spiritual corruption. He is an actor of great profundity in a superficial art. It will always be his fate to be cramped, not only by the shortcomings of directors, not only by the financiers with their commercial demands, but by the Board of Film Censors. The financiers are not interested in psychological truth, and the Board do not recognise morality.



Secret Agent

M

Studio Portrait

Crime and Punishment

EDITORIAL

Sack the Lot!

WARDOUR STREET'S CENSOR BOARD—the tame committee which the film trade retains to preserve it from the deeper forms of immorality—is in the wars again. In fact, the Board of Censors is rather too often in the wars these days. Wardour Street will have to do something about it. It may even have to get a new Censor Board. The present one with its too aged mind and too palsied hand is becoming embarrassing. Schlerosis of judgment has set in, and pensioning off would appear to be an act of kindness.

Once upon a time the Censor Board was content to deal with morals, or what it thought was morals. In this capacity, it achieved some remarkable feats of moral distinction. It permitted leggery *ad lib*—or as near *lib* as makes no matter—but eliminated the Lord's Prayer from a serious film on cathedrals. It allowed Dietrich to slip through an act of nudery by disguising herself 'on the cut' as her own statue, but with awesome delicacy cut the reference to the devil in the song "Get thee behind me Satan." The result was, more or less, "Get thee behind me—click."

These adventures in the moral judgment would have surprised the great philosophers, but no one worried very much. If one saw a blind man being led down Wardour Street, "There," one said from the window, "goes the Board of Censors." And it could not matter much, for the industry was on infant legs and serious problems were never likely to arise. Few films had the Lord's Prayer to cut and few films invited the devil to do anything but get in front of them.

But time changes, the film marches on and matters of serious import arise. The films are getting nearer to reality. In America they are already touching on social problems and to-morrow they will be touching on them here. At the American end, through Will Hays, the film men are proud to touch in their stories on the great problems of peace and work. To-morrow we in England shall be proud too.

The Censor Board in England does not apparently know what is happening. It recently held up a peace film with monumental clumsiness, it even talked of referring it to the War Office. It recently cut down a discussion of Britain's relation to the League of Nations though not an element in the treatment was outside the run of the ordinary news.

We have heard it said that the Board of Censors represents the servants' hall of the Conservative Central Office, but this would be to offer an unwarrantable insult to the Conservative Party. It would be smarter than to talk of referring a peace film to the War Office. However this may be, it will be dangerous for the film trade if it is representative of any party at all. It will be worse still if the irresponsible councils of political hangers-on are permitted to influence it.

The film has a great role to perform within the limits of an entertainment policy, and has as much to do for the public welfare as the B.B.C. Already there are signs that it appreciates its national duty. It will not do this duty well if its servants on the Censor Board lead it into political embarrassment.

Children's Films

EXHIBITORS IN this country complain that their choice of films for children's programmes is becoming more and more limited. Nevertheless they continue to organise juvenile audiences and therefore they must shoulder the responsibility to them.

A half-hearted attempt to provide programmes vaguely suitable for children is not good enough. If children like adventure films they should be shown specially edited versions of current Westerns. But exhibitors cannot be expected to know what appeals to children. For this knowledge they should go for advice to the child specialists, not to the figure-heads of educational and juvenile organisations, but to the rank and file of teachers and parents who are in daily contact with the child mind and who have enough knowledge and imagination to look at a film through the eyes of an eight-year-old.

The exhibitor seems to have forgotten that to a child reality can be as dramatic and entertaining as fantasy and make-believe. Children have more sympathy for a lamb that has lost its mother than for Pluto in distress, and the chicken that tries to swallow the worm too large for its capacity is a first-class comedian.

This country has a wealth of short interest films with subjects ranging from sea-anemones to coal mines which, with the exception of a few experimentalists, have been forgotten by the exhibitors.

Here Go Our Flags

WITH THIS NUMBER *World Film News* goes to double size and takes its place with the luxurious monthlies which strike at you from the bookstalls and charge you a shilling.

From all over, we have been asked for more—for larger articles, for a wider range of services. We recognise that the demand is a genuine one. Trade journals and fan magazines direct your romantic attention to the star-spangled heavens. We, *ventre à terre*, head in air, combine realism with the romance. We recognise that films are not only a matter of stars and publicities, but of men and ideas.

And cinema is a wider world than the trade journals and fan magazines will recognise. It has audiences in art and education, and the social services as well as in simple entertainment. It is these new audiences we are asked increasingly to serve. We do so happily.

Here go our flags, and—as Arthur Dent has brightly said of us—"they are all tendentious towards good causes." It is for you now to wave your own little shilling flags. They are part of the show.

WE ARE DISAPPOINTED THAT

The Film Trade did not get together over quota recommendations to the Moyne Committee.

* * *

There is no sign of an immediate return to the single-feature programme.

world FILM news

JULY 1936

Editor: MARION A. GRIERSON

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British Film Industry Faces Crisis

While luncheons at the Savoy and Dorchester can still be bought and glamorous first nights flood the London night, while the trumpetings of publicity departments fill the air, the moving finger slowly writes and rumbles of approaching doom are heard in the corridors of Wardour Street.

British film production faces impending troubles of some magnitude. The overbuilding of cinemas, which has inspired discussions between the Kinematograph Renters Society and the Cinematograph Exhibitors Association, progresses slowly compared with the speed at which new studios are being built.

Thirty new stages* are either in the building or completed. The problem is where the stages will get film productions to support them.

The studios of London Film Productions at Denham, which cost £750,000 to build, head the list with nine stages built, and space for six more, likely to be built at the end of the year.

The new Pinewood studios at Iver, Bucks, which have been financed by the Lord Portal interests, cost £1,000,000 in *de luxe* fittings with six stages and space for more. The Lord Portal interests are also behind C. M. Woolf's General Film Distributors.

Many other independent building enterprises are in progress round London, while a number of studios like Julius Hagen's at Twickenham are extending existing space.

The problem facing the production companies at the moment is gross over-expenditure on film production and on overheads. It is generally admitted in the film trade that a collapse is imminent and that it may come any time within the next six months. Vast sums have been spent on films that have flopped on the second night in the West End.

After many years' refusal to finance films, the City suddenly loosed its purse strings a couple of years back. But it loosed them indiscriminately, and it is no exaggeration to say that certain film companies in this country obtained money on false pretences. Groups of charlatans and incompetents from every other film production centre have gathered in Wardour Street.

Great luncheons have been staged, glittering premières arranged, sheafs of publicity scattered broadcast. Studios are being erected regardless of production needs. Thousands are spent and the films, the marketable commodity, have been scarcely saleable propositions.

The position is not likely to affect the well organised and well financed companies, but it will undoubtedly hit a great many independent companies.

The City has heard at last that all is not well and there has been a withdrawal of finance from certain quarters. At least one of the big groups backing British films is now demanding a better assurance of financial return.

Of the thirty new stages the greater proportion is unlikely to earn its keep.

Korda's organisation has contracts for letting its stages to independent film producing companies, and the same applies to Pinewood. This should make a profit. Pinewood has a certain chain of production companies who will have to produce there, as the studios will be closely linked with the distribution financiers.

With the others, though, it is distinctly dubious.

* Stage—there are usually two to six stages in a studio. A stage can usually accommodate two drawing-room sets.

Sydney Horler Horrified by British Scripts

BY DENIS MYERS

"If you ask me where British films principally fall down, it's in their scenarios." That's what Sydney Horler, the man who stepped into Edgar Wallace's shoes, thriller writer with a three million public, told me.

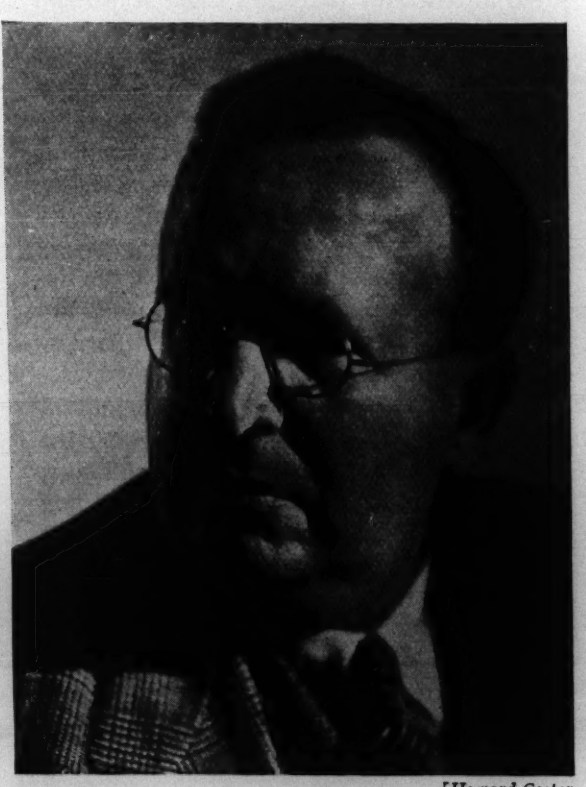
In his study, one that Edgar Wallace would have loved, complete with shining dictaphone and affectionately signed photographs, he leaned back and looked through the windows at the British Museum outside.

"Production, technique, artists (except for actresses, and they are terrible), equipment, they have got all these," he went on, "but those scripts they shoot from"—Sydney Horler shook his head more in sorrow than in anger.

British producers seem, according to him, to have absorbed the vices of Hollywood without their virtues. The time-wasting, the conferences, the money poured out on material which is never used . . . those things happen over here, too.

"Who are the scenario writers in England?" Mr. Horler asked the British Museum. The British Museum did not reply; Mr. Horler did.

"They are, generally speaking, the unsuccessful playwrights, journalists, friends of 'someone in the ring.' It's all very sad and—bad business.



[*Howard Coster*

Sydney Horler

"Mind you, I've no grievances. I've done and am doing scenarios myself, but what happens to them?" the Horler's eyes twinkled. "They read them, they say 'Thanks old boy, that's fine, just what we want'; they pay for them, and they use the title and scrap the rest."

"But don't Hollywood do the same?" I asked.

"Sure . . . I mean, certainly," said Horler the adaptable, "but Hollywood improves. Did you see *The Unguarded Hour?* As a play, it was . . ." He grimaced at the pigeons outside, "but as a film done by M.G.M. it was a grand show.

"Hollywood is recognising now that the scenario writer is of paramount . . . no publicity pun intended . . . importance. Why," he sounded wistful, "they are even giving a little prominence to the writers' names.

"But here . . . go down and have a look at *Two's Company*. I grant you that there's very little resemblance in the film to the original book of mine but . . . go and have a look at the size of my name. I'll lend you a pair of field glasses.

"It's time the cinema industry realised that there is not only a fan appeal, that is box office. Star actors' names are not everything.

"Yes, put Clark Gable up in electric lights and the theatre will pack; but if it is a bad story the house will be empty at the end of the week.

"There is an intelligent public that picks library books by their authors, chooses its theatre by the playwright's name, and would go to the cinema on the scenarist's name provided the film is well done otherwise.

"Look how audiences to-day take notice of the directors' names; that's one sign of the box office appeal that is not confined to the fans.

"It's the lack of organisation over here that is the real trouble. British Producers with an eye to the future should be training scenario writers, picking the best, and importing the aces in that field from Hollywood to show them the ropes."

Mr. Horler shook his head at the pigeons.

"Do you think there is a public for thriller films?" I asked.

Thriller-writer Horler smiled.

"Melodrama always had, and always will have, a public," he said, "even among the highbrows, if only for relaxation; I know many Cabinet Ministers who read them, and go to see them, but they must be good."

"*Two's Company* had a very good Press," I said.

Sydney Horler beamed at the pigeons.

Denham Gets on with the Job

Korda's Wealth of Nations

By Marie Seton

SINCE LONDON FILM PRODUCTIONS built their new studio at Denham, that quiet unobtrusive little village presents a most peculiar sight to any passer-by. Come through the old-fashioned village street at lunch-time and more likely than not you find a crowd of extras in none too new evening clothes rushing into the once sleepy pub. Or on the other hand it may be a bevy of would-be Mr. Cochran lovelies disguised as gypsies for the Annabella picture *Wings of the Morning*. Every pub for miles around is now coining money through the invasion of Mr. Korda's 2,000 employees. Even the most modest dimity tea-room is finding that eggs, boiled, scrambled, poached or fried won't satisfy this temperamental horde; while the price of land has soared in the last three months.

The new studio, where the din of hammers is still so deafening that the opinions and counter opinions of half the crack technicians of Europe are lost to the visiting correspondent, sprawls magnificently over nearly a couple of hundred acres. Hundreds of offices, dressing-rooms like week-end flats, a dozen or so miles of passages have been quite beautifully decorated; the colour scheme, surprisingly restrained for this expensive Tower of Babel, is cream for the walls and red for the woodwork.

The move from Isleworth to Denham has upset most of Mr. Korda's old plans. Something like a couple of dozen of the stories he has bought from time to time have been sold to other companies. Only *Rembrandt* with Charles Laughton plods along; but shrouded in secrecy as Mr. Laughton will allow no journalistic sleuths on the set. The long delayed *Elizabeth* has been passed on to Erich Pommer, who has formed what amounts to his own company within London Films. Pommer is also preparing *Troop Ship*, of which Cameron Menzies is the director and the scenarists too numerous to mention.

The much-talked-of *Cyrano* will now be made by one of the tenant companies at Denham, New World Pictures. Another tenant is Capitol Films, at present shooting the master of innuendo, Tom Walls, in *Dishonour Bright*.

Robert T. Kane, the big noise of New World, seems to be as busy and as ambitious as Mr. Korda. He has signed up Annabella for several pictures, and Henry Fonda at the last moment as co-star for her first English speaking adventure, *Wings of the Morning*, which is the first story picture to be made in Europe in Technicolour. To quote the publicity sheet, *Wings of the Morning* has pronounced box-office angles for "it will put on the screen for the first time in natural colour that greatest of sporting events—the Derby." The unit had banked on a brown horse winning for the colour scheme, as brown like pale blue had come in for years; hence great consternation when it was grey!

"Thirty beautiful girls play the parts of gypsies in a colourful prologue dated 1890. For the same sequence fifteen gypsy caravans and a hundred real Romany gypsies have been used. Annabella appears in full gypsy costume with dark hair and flashing eyes." And later she becomes her own descendant in the fashion creations of 1936 designed by René Hubert. The director is Glen Tryon and the Technicolour staff includes Natalie Kalmus as colour director (meet Mrs. Kalmus in Meetings and Acquaintances), and Rey Rennahan, who has been photographing colour for fifteen years and filmed both *La Cucaracha* and *Becky Sharp*.

Conrad Veidt and Raymond Massey will play along with a so far nameless but nevertheless glittering star from Hollywood, in an adaptation of the seventeenth century historical romance *Under the Red Robe*. Mr. Massey seems busy on the *Time Machine*.

Under the Red Robe is the second lavish production in which Mr. Kane is setting out to "see that productions of New World Pictures will be worthy of distribution to cinemas throughout the world alongside of Twentieth Century-Fox's brilliant Hollywood line-up."

Meanwhile, Korda has decided not to make a colour picture of his own until the end of the year; and the telephone exchange at Denham is so busy that some people have to go to Uxbridge to make their calls.

TRADE LAGS BEHIND PUBLIC

Oscar Deutsch, controller of the Odeon Theatres, writes to *The Era* in regard to the public reaction to Norman Walker's *Turn of the Tide*, which has been booked extensively on the Odeon circuit :

"In all the better class situations, the public have thoroughly enjoyed it, and commented very favourably. In the Industrial Theatres they have liked it without any comment.

"I think the reason that this film has done well is due to the fact that it is rather out of the ordinary rut of entertainment, and is in a class which we classify as a homely picture, but, unfortunately, the advance trailer and the very poor publicity that the renters supplied have probably been responsible for it not being in the tip-top class, and also the fact that it did not have a West End presentation."

* * *

***Turn of the Tide* brought a breath of fresh air into the cinema, yet neither the producers, distributors, nor exhibitors, usually quick to seize upon novelty, had sufficient faith in the film. More films like *Turn of the Tide* will be made, and it is exhibitors with vision like Oscar Deutsch who will make money out of them.**

The Golden Voice

R. E. Jeffry has just celebrated his fifth year as commentator for Universal Talking News. This reel circulates mainly in the Provinces where the fans regard Jeffry as the ace of all commentators. He confesses to a considerable fan mail and invitations to open bazaars and suchlike are frequent.

He writes all his commentaries and as each issue averages eight items, and he has done six hundred issues, that means close on five thousand stories.

Jeffry's commentaries go all out for the laughs and generally get them. The material he works to is not always of the best, but this he can usually conceal with a neatly-turned phrase, that attracts attention away from the mute to the sound track. Up in Lancashire and Wales they think a lot of him.

Film Music
KURT LONDON
There is a pioneer excitement for the reader of this book. Here is a new art of infinite possibilities and a man who has given himself to it from its very beginning and who understands its conditions and its potentialities as probably no one else in the world.
With 26 photographs and 12 musical facsimiles. 12/6

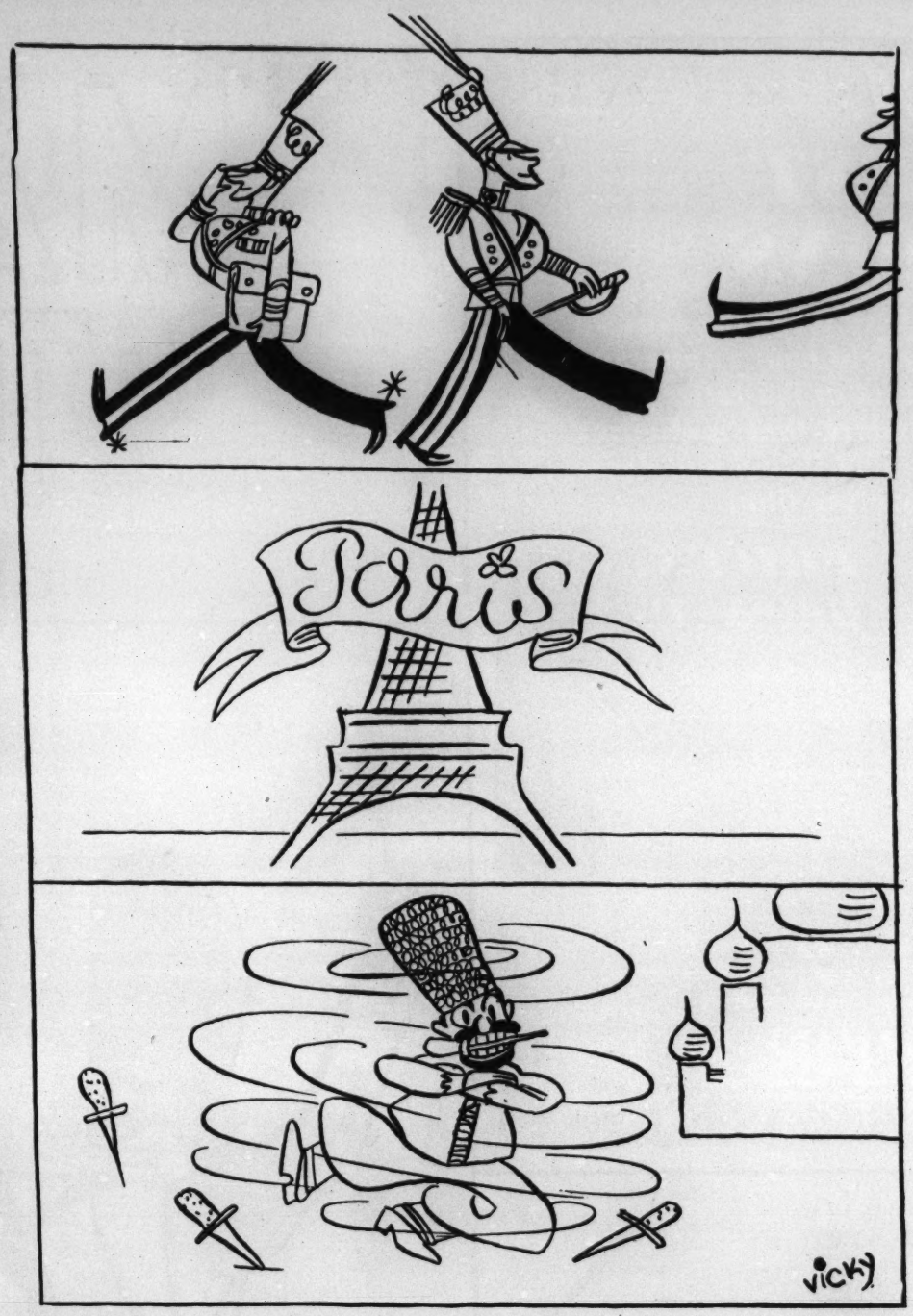
Documentary Film
PAUL ROTHA
Preface by JOHN GRIERSON
"Should mark a definite stage in the evolution of the cinema."—*New English Weekly.*
"A real book about things that matter by a man who has thought about and achieved them."—*Observer.*
● Book Society Recommendation.
● Book Guild Recommendation.
64 pages of superb photographs. 12/6

Radio
RUDOLPH ARNHEIM
A work that breaks new ground, by the author of *Film*, likely to have a decisive and inspiring influence on broadcasting technique—no aspect of which is neglected. A mine of suggestions for broadcaster and producer—it will help the listener. "The most comprehensive and reasoned exposition of radio art that we have seen."—*Wireless World.*
With 32 illustrations 12/6

24 Russell Square **FABER AND FABER** London, W.C.1

What films have taught me

BY
LESLIE WITHERS
(FILM CRITIC,
"SUNDAY
MERCURY,"
BIRMINGHAM)



"I have learned that Vienna is full of people in uniforms and steins."

"I know that Paris has a tower called Eiffel."

"I know that there is insanity in Russia."

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THINK FOR A moment about the last half dozen you have seen and decide honestly whether they have touched upon Reality; if the people in them did the things people you know would do; if those things would happen at all. Characters rarely rub their eyes, sneeze, sniff, or do all the little everyday actions—only in farce when the gestures are absurdly accentuated.

The trouble is that actors, actresses and directors have been schooled along extremely fictional lines. There are things definitely not done; others are just never thought of. Bits that reveal national characteristics are either exaggerated or entirely fallacious.

I've never been to America but that country's films have educated me to the following facts, amongst others:

That Atlantic City favours business conventions at which sales representatives forget graphs and think of legs, throw over bonds for blondes. I know that hick towns are hot-beds of frightful gossip, mainly about morals, and contain many old men with pointed beards and squeaky voices and prodigious spitting range; that even lesser class apartment houses have one kitchen per person, usually refrigerators, always a telephone; that taxis are like locusts and as much used by the public as hats; that the subways and the overhead railways are the method of transit of typists and the lesser business crowd and are frightfully hot in the summer.

I know that in times of trouble an American always says "Everything's goin' to be awlrite!"; that Chicago is a noble city (architecturally); that editors and general managers are known to and addressed by their staffs by their initials.

* * *

I've seen the Bronx, Wall Street, Broadway, Coney Island, 42nd Street, and Grand Central Station often enough to breed contempt.

I know that typists are beautiful, invariably well-dressed, unusually familiar with their employers (whether owned by them outside the office or not).

With courts, district attorneys, election methods, the police, newspaper offices and employees, college life and its 24 hours insistence upon proficiency at football—with all of these I am on more than speaking terms.

* * *

As for British films—well, from them I've learned that Vienna is gay and leafy and full of people in uniforms and steins; that London consists of Trafalgar Square at night, the Bank of England, advertisements disguised as buses, taxis that make Boadicea's chariot look like next year's Motor Show, with drivers who are always Cockney, and the Royal Garden Party.

That English young men dress ridiculously well and speak a stilted, rounded speech known, most unfairly, as "Oxford"; that English girls are like icebergs in muslin, sometimes smile wanly, and don't know what to do with their hands.

* * *

I know that Paris has a tower called Eiffel (because this shot always bears the flowery caption "Paris"); that there are Pyramids in Egypt, convicts in Devil's Island, sex obsession in the Tudor family, insanity in Russia, religious mania in Scotland, Persian cats in Turkey, and hundreds of innocent looking spies under the personal direction of a man called Hitchcock.

All petty criminals, I realise, say "Gorblimey!" and "Lumme, guv'nor!" and I have seen that railway trains are wheeled watertanks drawing felt-lined match-boxes; that inns are awfully "olde worlde" and full of rafters, beards and darts.

* * *

Also I fully understand that policemen are snail-like, think as fast and as much as stalagmites, and lugubriously suck pencil stubs; that butlers are self-effacing, ever-present monoliths; that sons of the peerage are half-witted, in debt, always in evening dress and yet marry the prettiest girl you ever saw.

That, in the main, is all I know of America and England after six years of being a film critic. My education along these lines is now not progressive, but repetitive.

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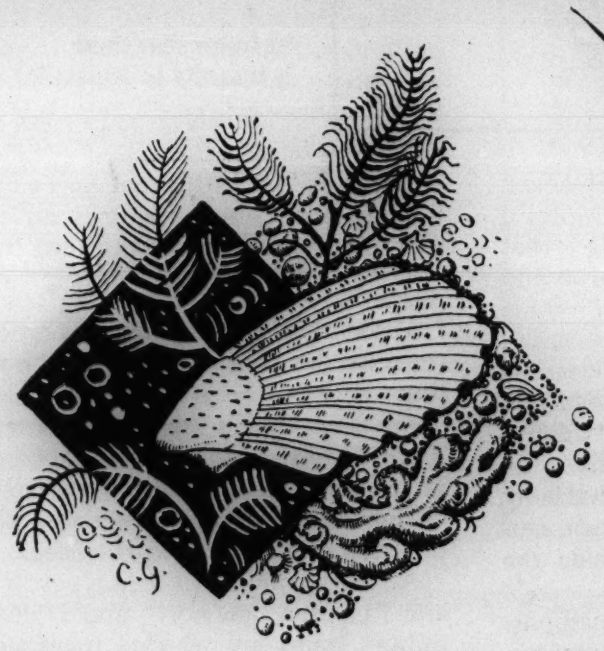

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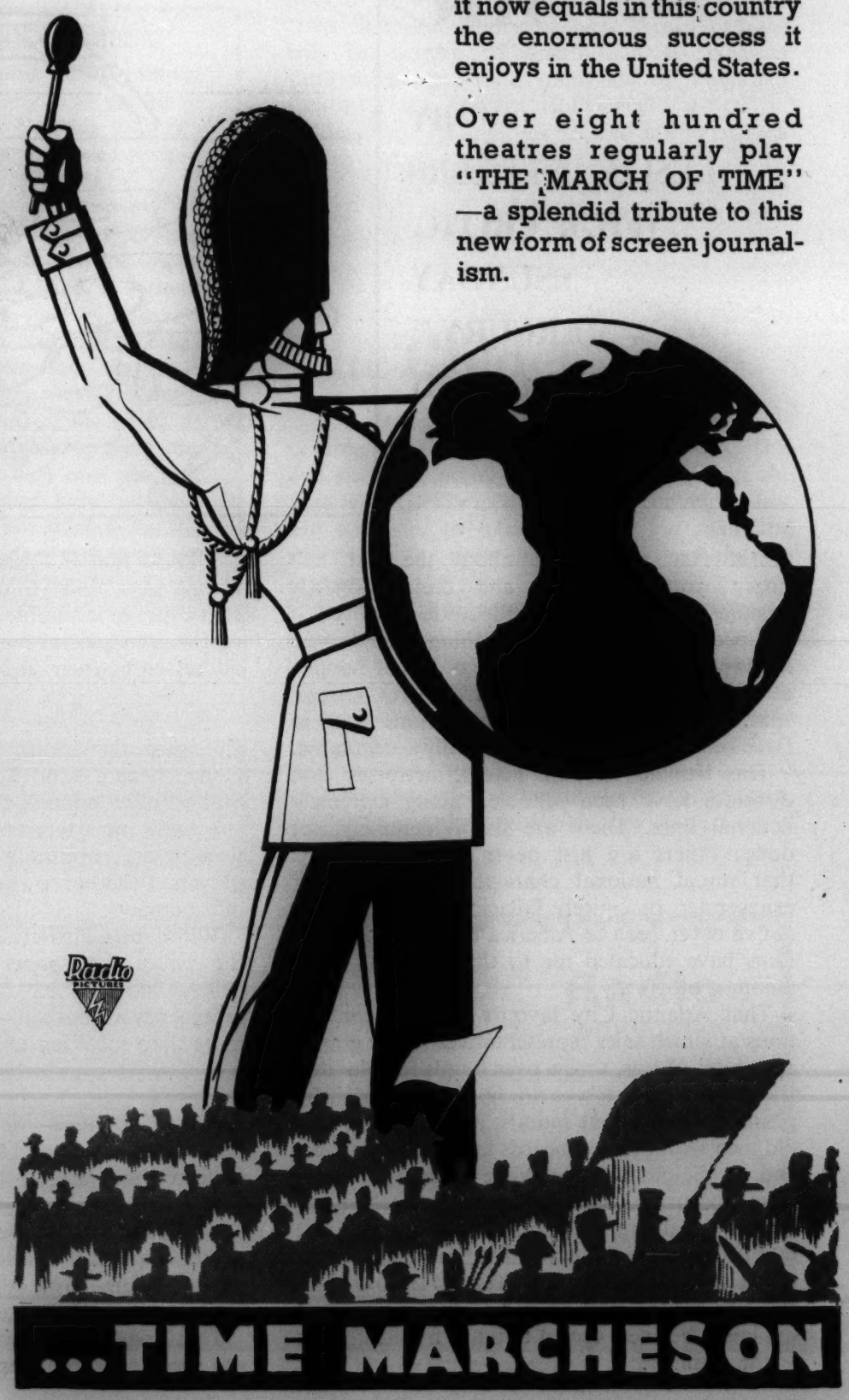

Hollywood defeats Pabst

DIRECTOR OF KAMERADSCHAFT RETURNS TO FRANCE

Two years ago G. W. Pabst crossed the Atlantic to make films in America. Europe held its breath and waited. Would he become the servant of Hollywood finance, like those of his colleagues who had made the crossing before him; or would the magic of his name and his renowned psychological insight win him his freedom in the States and make him a second Lubitsch?

The inevitable happened. Hollywood won. But unlike many of his distinguished predecessors Pabst determined that even if he could not swallow America, America should not swallow him. He has returned to Europe, and is negotiating a new film in Paris.

What will he do now? Pabst has shown that at his best he is among the greatest directors in movie history, and that even at his worst he retains a supreme technical skill. But technical skill is not enough. Will his next films, made with all the maturity of his long experience, be of the *Kameradschaft* calibre—or will he quietly fade out with a series of *Don Quixotes?*

His American experiences have made even the level-headed Pabst a disappointed man. He arrived to find himself and his work unknown to the Hollywood executives (they had never heard of the *Drei Groschen Oper*). He was rushed into production a month after his arrival in strange surroundings. He was offered—in fact overwhelmed with—expert assistance in every branch of film-making; but he had no knowledge of American methods and no time to learn them. Experts whom he would have used to good account under different circumstances merely became a barrier between himself and his film. In these conditions *A Modern Hero* was made. It appeared in England, passed practically unnoticed, and happily for its director, disappeared as quietly as it came.

There followed the preparation of a script for an anti-war film under Paramount. But the story was considered politically dangerous and the film was abandoned without entering production.

Renouncing Hollywood and all its works, Pabst turned his attention to New York. He had long been interested in reconciling the stubborn rigidity of opera to the fluent demands of movie. He now set to work on an experimental adaptation of *Faust*. But financial backing failed before the script was completed. Pabst pleaded incompatibility with America and returned to Europe. He is at present in Paris discussing a possible film with officials of the French industry.

Pabst came to the cinema from the hard and practical milieu of stage production. His stage experience had given him two assets which were to prove important in his new medium. It had taught him to handle the most intractable of actors and to reduce their personal inclinations to terms of his own intentions; and it had taught him the organisational as well as the æsthetic value of individual production control from start to finish. Inherent in his own mental make-up were an intense interest in psycho-analytic theory and a passion for exactitude.

Thus equipped he began his film career. Psychology he applied to his handling of actors; exactitude to his control of production. For Pabst believes wholeheartedly in the closest contact with his technicians. Beyond the normal conferences with art-directors, cameramen, recordists, cutters, he likes to discuss his needs with his carpenters, electricians, property men and floor staff. He maintains that close participation in the work of the subsidiary production departments is of the greatest importance since it gives the director precise and knowledgeable control over the necessary gives-and-takes of production. Veto an enthusiastic proposal, and you make an enemy; direct it in harmony with other demands, and you add to the film.

On the floor Pabst is as much concerned with his camera as with his actors. He believes that power of statement in films is largely the result of precision in camera set-up and emphasis. He compares the frame of the screen to the writer's word. One word may have many meanings, many emphases. So may one shot contained in the boundaries of the frame, and it is the director's business to select the right values through his viewfinder.

Leading Film Director Turns Left

Jean Renoir, son of the great painter, and one of the founders of the celebrated French *avant-garde* movement, made his reputation with the production of *Nana* when still a young man. This film put him in the front rank of French directors.

He has made two important sound films, *La Chienne* and *Toni*, neither of which has been shown in England.

In Paris Jean Renoir's new film is considered to be distinctly Red. No one in the commercial cinema has a good word for it, but it is to be seen in the cinemas of the working class districts of Paris. With the coming of the *Front Populaire* government in France and the establishment of the Maison de la Culture, *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange* is being widely distributed through trades union organisations and other non-theatrical channels. The film is a very direct exposure of journalistic racketeering. It shows the exploitation of the employees of a newspaper, it shows the editor decamping with the staff's wages after seducing several young women, and the staff proceeding to run the paper on communal lines.

As soon as the paper is on its feet, the editor returns and assumes a dictatorial position. The hero, who was a ringleader of the collective work, shoots him when he is about to decamp a second time.

Le Crime de Monsieur Lange is not a great picture, it is possibly not much more than a competent picture, but it is certainly a relief from the tedious welter of French commercial films, which have nothing to say that is either fresh or amusing or in any way connected with life.

E. L.

France may Nationalise Film Industry

The landslide towards the Left, in the French elections, may have a decisive influence on the destiny of the French film industry.

It is well known that one of the most important aims of the Socialist Party is the nationalisation of industry. In the Socialist programme, such organisations as the Bank of France, public and private banks, insurance companies, industrial concerns, railways, would be managed by the State under the direct control of the Government. So, too, with the film business.

Interviewed a few weeks ago by the weekly fan magazine *Cinemonde*, Paul Faure, general secretary of the Socialist Party, said they wanted to make a national institution of the cinema industry. "If our party holds in its hands the whole political power, it will make the cinema industry a national institution, because it is impossible for a Government which wants to introduce a new policy to leave a medium of propaganda as strong as the cinema in the hands of groups whose interests may be contrary to those of the Government.

"I have the real feeling that a Socialist State would easily create a much better cinema industry than this one of the present capitalist regime.

"We would not use the cinema especially for propaganda pictures. Sometimes we would make pictures illustrating social ideals. I do not think that propaganda is everything in the cinema. The first condition is to make artistic and fine pictures which are entertainment. If the artistic quality of the films is improved, the minds of the patrons will be improved too.

"Newsreels should show real things, and be loyal and honest. There should be propaganda in the newsreels for such ideals as peace and social equality.

"We would welcome foreign pictures. They bring to our screens an original note. They help us to know the soul of other nations. It would be stupid to ban them. But it would be stupid, too, to open our borders unreservedly to foreign productions.

"It is generally agreed that State monopolies, especially in France, have had bad results. Some may be afraid that the Socialist State would make bad pictures.

"State enterprises may have defects, but it is easy to control them, to improve them.

"If the motion picture industry comes into the hands of official organisations where producers and patrons are represented together instead of being managed by irresponsible State employees, as under the present monopolies, **it is certain we shall go forward.**"

CONTINENTAL

Director of "Dood Wasser" makes commercial film

Rutten is a film director who owes his name (let us not speak of fame) to a row, which was kicked up by annoyed spectators on the Biennale of Venice in August, 1934. His film *Dood Wasser* was incomprehensible for a public that could not understand a word of Dutch. As a film *Dood Wasser* was remarkable enough. Not, however, on account of the personality of the director but exclusively on account of the fotografy. For Holland this film had its interest. Not only because the theme was special Dutch (the diking in of the Zuiderzee) but because this picture was a first attempt to produce something serious.

And although neither the Dutch public nor the critics spoke so very much in favourite of *Dood Wasser* film societies in abroad were deeply interested in Rutten's work. Indeed, as a documentary there were many things to be praised in this picture. As for the directorship of Rutten we were not convinced yet of his artistic capacities, and we wanted to wait the results of a production,

W.F.N.'s Dutch correspondent tells the story of Rutten, the director, in his own inimitable English.

which could give better possibilities to judge Rutten's talents. Then Rutten was sent to the Dutch East Indies in order to make the outdoor shots for the film *Rubber*, a transcription of a well-known novel of Mrs. Szekely-Lulofs.

In these times, now political passions stir up people to protest against each film (the performances of *Kermesse Heroique* were made impossible all over Holland on account of a kind of fascistic terror) it was necessary to make drastic changes in the subject. Mrs. Szekely who had offered a rather astringent opinion of life in the Dutch East Indies—we leave aside in how far this point of view is wrong or wright—had to alter essential parts of her novel, which was certainly not a change for the good.

The film *Rubber* got ready one of these days. And although the opening night won't take place before the first week of September next the Tobis enabled us to come and see the picture.

And indeed we are sorry to say that we cannot be so very enthusiastic about it.

As for the story we regret that each tendency has been cut conscientiously. What remains now is not more than a love-story somewhere in the tropics. And as the author of the scenario did not have very much routine, this story has been told without the tension it needs. The only problem that is posed in this film is the position of a planter's wife, left alone in a dreadful jungle when her husband is working somewhere else; how she comes to begin a flirtation, with all the traditional consequences of it. We have seen all that before and better. Technically this picture has been produced intelligently. The acting is also sufficient. As for Rutten, we are convinced now that he is no director of importance. In *Rubber* each detail has been neglected accurately. The working of climax and anti-climax seems forgotten. In scenes which must cause dramatic effects no use is made of not even one single close-up. There is an absolut lack of shape in this picture. And in comparison to *Young Hearts*, *Rubber* has not succeeded in giving us the slightest emotion.

Rutten has however new plans. After the Colonial Departement and the Government of the Dutch East Indies refused the production in Atjeh or elsewhere of a picture entitled *In Days of Fight* he intends to make a picture on the isle of Java of which the theme tells of the strained relations between natives and Europeans and the rapprochement which follows when the Europeans help the native population against their mutual enemy: the volcano.

Before this film Rutten announced to produce in July next a screen version of an old theatreplay, *The Secret of Macropoulos*. The leading role is given to Mrs. Else Mauhs, famous Dutch actress.

R. H. J. KIEK.

Renoir Heads Socialist Film League

(*From W.F.N. Paris correspondent*)

An important new movement is being founded in France called *Ciné Liberté*. At its head is Jean Renoir, famous French film director, who recently made *La Vie est a Nous* for the Communist Party.

Ciné Liberté is organising a vast network of non-theatrical showings throughout France, available to all members for a small subscription. Worthwhile films, or films banned by the censor, will be shown.

One of the main objects of *Ciné Liberté* is to organise public feeling to such an extent that the censorship will have to be abolished.

The central office has four main committees, dealing with technical matters, programmes, audiences, and Press.

* * *

WALTER RUTTMAN'S NEW FILM

Walter Ruttman, best known for his early documentary film, *Berlin*, has found his latest location on the shores of the Baltic. Here he has filmed the work of the lifeboatmen, whose risks and sacrifices on the North Sea and the Baltic have provided him with a theme round which he has built a drama of highly-coloured incidents.

W.F.N. has received a communication from Berlin couched in terms of the best Aryan bombast, but we feel that in the hands of Ruttman the incidents will tell their own story of heroism, without any attempt to play up Nazi sentiments. The film follows closely the actual procedure of normal salvage operations. The signal of distress is received, and quickly the lifeboat is launched. The breeches buoy is tried in vain, and the lifeboat is forced to approach perilously near the sinking ship. The climax is reached when a small, inflated rubber boat is sent out to bring the crew one by one back to safety.

Such a theme will undoubtedly give Ruttman every opportunity to build up an actuality drama of the first order.

Member of "Les Six" to Broadcast here

On July 10th François Poulenc, French composer, will broadcast a recital of his own piano music. Walter Leigh here estimates Poulenc's contribution to modern music.

"François Poulenc, born in 1899, belongs to the bright young generation of composers of whom much less is heard nowadays than their quickly earned fame just after the War seemed to promise. Gramophone enthusiasts know his Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano, a slender, attractive work; and his 'Aubade' has recently been used for a ballet. But there can be few composers whose names have become well-known upon so little tangible evidence. Elegance, grace, Parisian wit and charm are characteristics of all his work; also superficiality and a lack of artistic conscience, leading him often into banality. For so gifted a musician it seems that he is too easy-going to make the necessary efforts towards greatness which some of his contemporaries, notably Milhaud, have made.

"In the highly-coloured 'Post-War' years when the Group Movement was fashionable in the arts, six French composers, Milhaud, Honegger, Auric, Poulenc, Durey, and Germaine Taillefure formed a group appropriately called 'Les Six.' Although the organisation was soon dissolved the publicity-value attached to its title has ever since been considerable. Even now it is mainly as a sometime member of the 'Six' that Poulenc's name is known to the public. He has, indeed, only one major work to his credit, the delightful ballet 'Les Biches,' forever memorable for the tune:

'Say, what is Love?
Have you seen him, MacGregor?'

for the dancing of Nemtchinova, and for the enormous sofa."

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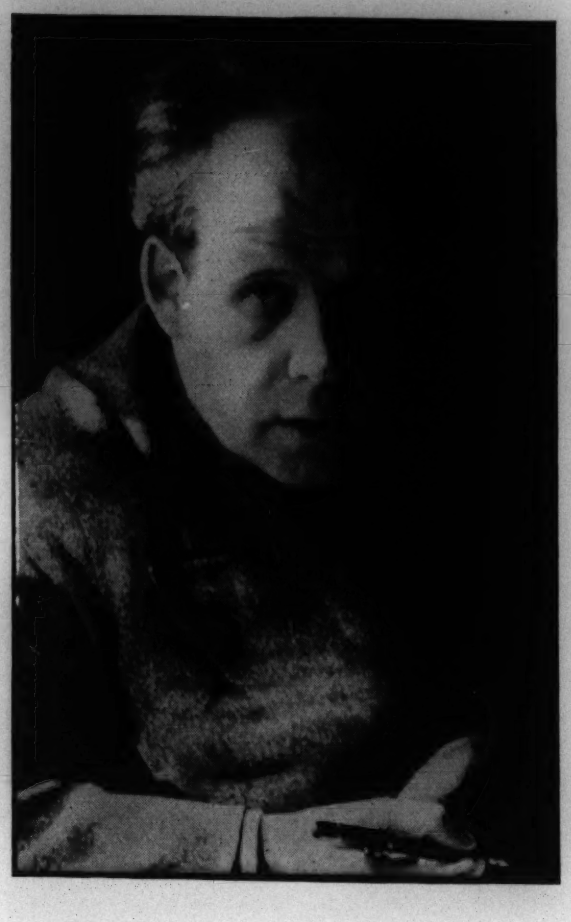


Sergei Mikhailovitch Eisenstein

U.S.S.R. goes Hollywood

Within the last three years there has been little or no information about Russian films. To clear the mystery "W.F.N." took the opportunity afforded by H. V. Meyerowitz's visit to obtain authentic news

by H. V. MEYEROWITZ

Without the help of S. M. Eisenstein I doubt whether I would have had the opportunity to see a single film, or interview anybody of importance during my stay in the U.S.S.R. I spent a whole week trying to get people on the telephone in Leningrad, and then wrote letters to Eisenstein and Pudovkin in Moscow, telling them that I was interested in film and particularly documentary film, and begging them to arrange things for me.

Eisenstein startled me by actually replying to my letter, calling on me as soon as I arrived in Moscow, and from that moment on everything was simple. He explained to me later on, that it was due to an African address on my letter-head that he paid so much attention to me, because he was intensely interested in Africa and was hoping to make a film there in the future. He pounced upon my African photographs and took away with him as many as he could get, and also a little Joruba mask carved in wood which I had been unwise to put on my writing desk. How lucky I was I only realised when I was told afterwards that a luckless reporter, who had been film critic on one of the largest London papers, had been ringing him regularly every morning for about five days. He always got Eisenstein on the telephone and was then calmly informed that Mr. Eisenstein had just left for the factory.

I asked him about the tragedy of his film in Mexico, and he remarked bitterly that his book with photographs would appear shortly. He was still busy with cutting the finished portions of "Biejen Meadow." This film deals with co-operative farming and is typical of the recent development of cinematography in the U.S.S.R., in that it has a personal hero in the figure of Peter Morozov, a young Pioneer, who had given his sabotaging father away to the authorities, and was in turn shot by him. This is an historical fact, and Morozov is the hero of all the young Pioneer organisations in the country.

Knowing the organisation in the U.S.S.R., I was extremely surprised when at the appointed time a motor car appeared to take me to Mosfilm, where Eisenstein had arranged the showing of two outstanding films of recent U.S.S.R. production. The first one seen was "**Aerograd.**"

"AEROGRAD"

Author-Director: A. P. Dovjenko
Camera: E. Tissé, M. Gindin

I presume that this film was originally written as a film with a strong political message—namely, drawing attention to the danger of an invasion from the Far East, and the building of a city, Aerograd, an air base to protect the eastern boundaries from Japanese insurrection. In order to develop this theme a most cumbersome and complicated appoach was chosen. A small group of Staroveri, a religious sect, living on the shores of the Amur where it flows into the Tartar Strait, had entered into negotiations with Japanese to help them to destroy a collective farm in the neighbouring district. The Japanese Samurai and two of his followers arrived armed with dynamite to blow up the Collective Farm. The attempt is frustrated through the vigilance of the collective farm's sentry, Chudiakov, who chases the intruders through the forest, shooting two of them and cornering the Samurai in a hut. The owner of the hut, the Starover, Glushak, comes out and reveals himself to be an old childhood pal of the collective farmer. He swears that nobody entered his hut, and the collective farmer believes him reluctantly and goes. The Samurai tries to incite the Staroveri community to an attack on the collective farms, which is frustrated through a Chuchk, and an airman who suddenly appears on the scene and shoots the Samurai.

The apotheosis was supposed to be the arrival of the Air Fleet, the dropping of parachutists, who then form into a military detachment and march off to lay the foundations of the new city of Aerograd.

Typical of the Dovjenko method, the whole political issue becomes of minor importance, not to say a disturbing element, in the whole epic rendering of the beautiful Far Eastern Siberian landscape, its forests, its rivers and its inhabitants. The main theme of the film is shifted from the political issue to the words of Chudiakov, the collective farmer partisan, and these words become the *leit-motif*. He says these words to his friend Glushak, when he suspects him of sheltering an enemy for the first time. He points to the landscape around him with a simple and touching movement of the head, and says in the same rhythm and very simply: "Is there anywhere in the world such beauty again?" meaning of course that this beauty should be protected from the onslaught of foreign and destructive elements. He says it again when the collective farmers attack the Staroveri by surprise and his friend falls into his hands. He prevents his comrades from killing him, pointing out that this was his case and that he was going to empty the cup to the dregs. He walks into the forest, his friend following him and tottering with tiredness. For a long time the camera follows this gruesome march through the forest until Glushak, who cannot walk any more, calls to Chudiakov who is so deep in thought that he seems to have forgotten everything. Chudiakov stops, and looking at the landscape around him remarks again reproachfully: "Is there anywhere in the world such beauty again?" This is the outstanding and emotionally strongest moment of the film. He loves his friend and at the same time has to destroy him for the sake of preserving all this beauty for the cause of the new State. He points his rifle at him, takes aim, and says: "You trees and mountains and rivers, be witnesses of my grief. I am shooting Glushak, sixty-two years of age, and a friend of mine since my childhood days." Glushak throws his hands up in the air and breaks out into an insane howling laughter. The scene ends there.

Dovjenko has created an epic of the grandeur of the Siberian country. He has managed to bring sound and moving pictures together, the wind, the cracking of branches under the feet of panting and breathless fugitives, the terrors of the dark-

H. V. Meyerowitz, a sculptor from South Africa and a student of the arts and crafts of backward nations, has recently returned to England from a tour of the studios in the U.S.S.R. He has been able to interview the leading personalities in the film industry there and has come to the conclusion that the documentary film movement in Russia has been seriously handicapped by the official "Arts" policy. He considers that a form of play-picture is being encouraged which repeats "all the mistakes of an artistically obsolete Western film industry." He has put his information, photographs and those stills supplied by Soviet film directors at the disposal of "World Film News."

ness of the forest, the beauties of unending mountain ranges rushing towards a camera suspended in an aeroplane. He has been fortunate to have two splendid actors who adapted their style and speech to the rhythm of the film and made the story of the tragic ending of a childhood friendship the crowning episode of the film. It is absurd, however, that a little Staroveri community should be the cause of calling up all this tremendous fuss and machinery. It is painful to hear and see people shrieking in a perfectly uncontrolled way, like bad actors on the stage, as the agitators of the Staroveri community, breaking up the rhythm of the film and destroying it.

Eisenstein, interviewed, remarked: "All that we have been trying to do in the beginning—namely, the elimination of theatrical actors—is coming back again. The building up of the film on the pretext of the danger of the Staroveri community is rather ridiculous."

Pudovkin, interviewed, said that Dovjenko was an outstanding figure among Russian cinema directors, that he was a Ukrainian and heavy, and inclined to give his films a slow, epic and romantic development, that when he read the script to an audience they had all been impressed by the perfect rhythm because he had read the words of the actors in the tone and with the expression that he wanted them pronounced. It was a disappointment to all of them when they saw the film, and he agreed with me that most of the actors had not been able to adapt themselves to the style.

It is a pity that here again, as in many cases of an artistic production in the U.S.S.R., a great artist had attempted to find a form for the political demands of the time and not succeeded.

The film was not well received by the public. It was too complicated for the simple man and too many problems, simultaneously dealt with, confused the issue. So far as the Socialistic realism goes, the Socialistic tendency was forced into the background and Dovjenko's best friends cannot call the film realistic—a film that at its best is a fantastic and tragic ballad.

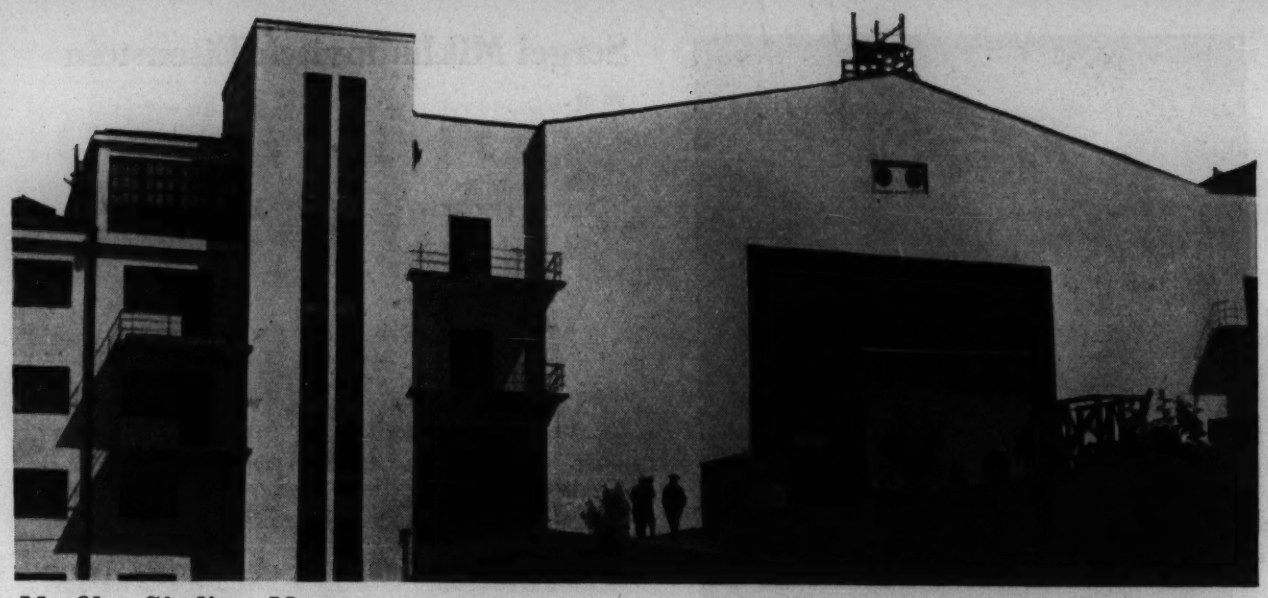
"WE OF KRONSTAD"

Director: Vinievski

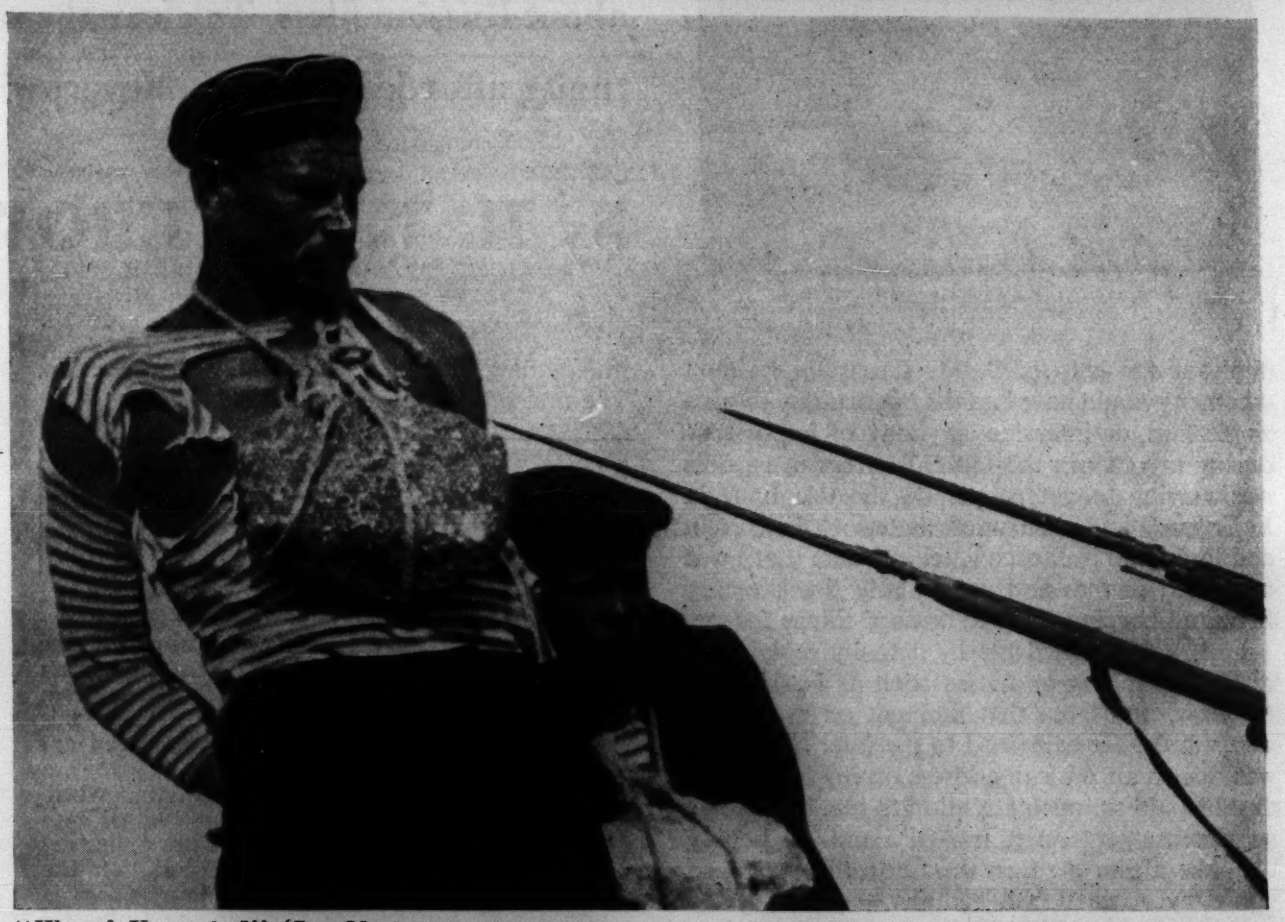
"We of Kronstad" is the first film by the young director, Vinievski. It was interesting to compare it with "Aerograd." It deals with the historical incident of the time of the civil wars when a small detachment of sailor volunteers from Kronstad was completely destroyed by the forces of General Judenich, advancing on Petrograd. Vinievski's problem was a much easier one than Dovjenko's. It is an historical film and no political or social question of future importance is at stake. He has made a straightforward and historical incident of it. Conforming to the desire for Folk's heroes, he has definitely put three actors in the leading roles: the Commissar in charge of the detachment, the rough and objectionable sailor who in the end becomes the only survivor and the saviour of the whole situation, and the wife of the Commander of the Red Forces.

The Commissar is sent from Petrograd to call for volunteers. He arrives in Kronstad at night, and, having explained the situation to the sailors, gets them to vote on each one who is chosen for the expedition. He persuades them to choose among themselves also one who does not belong to the party and who has shown himself a black character by grumbling over lack of food and knocking down a comrade who remonstrated with him for getting too familiar with a lady. The detachment lands and is destroyed after a gallant battle, and the survivors with stones around their necks are thrown from a rock into the sea. They all die with the exception of

(*Continued on page* 14)



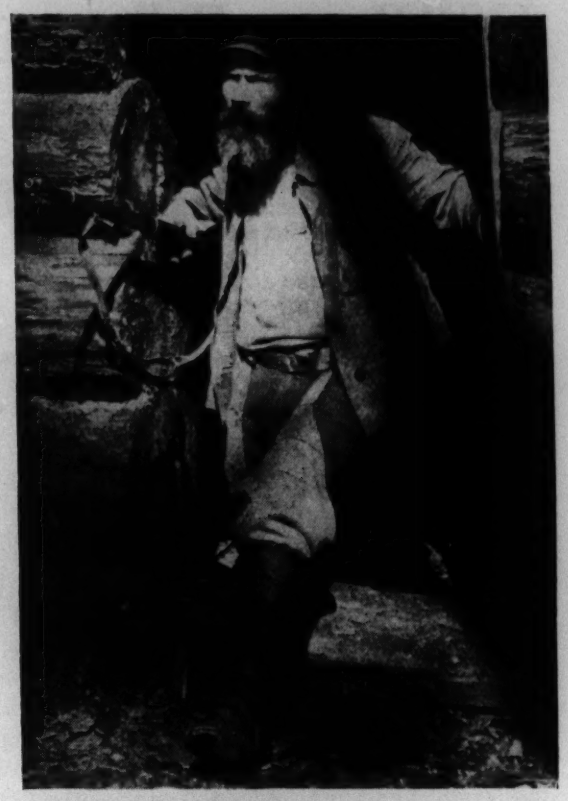
Mosfilm Studios, Moscow



"We of Kronstad" (Lenfilm)

"Circus" (Mosfilm)

"Circus" (*Mosfilm*)



"Aerograd" (*Mosfilm*)

"We of Kronstad" (*Lenfilm*)

U.S.S.R. goes Hollywood (*Continued from page* 12)

the hero, who manages not only to cut his bonds but also to dive and reclaim the corpse of the Commissar. He buries him under a stone mound and, helped by the wife of the Commander, escapes in women's clothes to Kronstad, to rally the remainder of the fleet to the assistance. The Red Forces are meanwhile being gradually overwhelmed by the attacks of Judenich's troops, but the sailors, fired to enthusiasm by the arriving hero and infuriated by his account of the atrocious killing of the surviving Communists and the Commissar, rush to the scene, land, and arrive at the psychological moment, in time to destroy the White Army, chasing the resisting ones and their Commander over the same rock into the sea, where their comrades had found their end.

The film has obviously been inspired by the Vassiliev brothers' "Chapæv." It has not the quality and tact in the drawing of the figures; they seemed more crudely characterised. The attempts at rough humour smack a bit of slap-stick, but the atmosphere of the time is splendidly rendered, and the effect of the film is very strong. Sound is used with great skill—promenading and whistling sailors in the night, strumming a balalaika, followed by the camera; the terrified children under the care of the Commander's wife, with the thundering of horses' hoofs of the White Cossack Regiments galloping by. The psychological arrival of the sailors is all very plausible and impressive. Feats like falling with a heavy stone round the neck down a cliff and coming up again unscathed, remind one of American "serials" with the miraculous escapes of actors who had previously been blown up with dynamite or shot from the ends of cannons.

The film was very well received in the U.S.S.R. It is simple and everybody can understand it. It has no complicated problems and Vinievski has, with this piece of work, come very much to the fore as a film director. It is certainly not realistic throughout but theatrical and false in the acting of many "comic" episodes. The convention of the theatre is obvious and painful to behold at frequent intervals.

These were the two main films shown to me by Eisenstein as representing the new work in the U.S.S.R. I could not persuade him to show me any rushes of his new film, but he kindly managed to arrange for me to see the pre-view of the film "Circus" directed by Alexandrov.

Social Problems Grafted On

The U.S.S.R. public had been looking forward with great expectations to the film "CIRCUS" because Alexandrov, the director, had previously been very successful with his film called "Happy Kids." The film was starring the actress L. P. Orlova, of whom Pudovkin remarked, moving the palms of his hands up and down, that she had already learned the necessary eyelid flutter from her Hollywood colleagues. This film belongs to the series of Americanised productions with social problems rather incongruously grafted on. It is not taken seriously by the important film directors in the U.S.S.R. but probably fits well into Boris Shumiatski's (Film chief of all production) idea for fostering the studio film industry.

A girl is stoned out of an American village. She falls exhausted into a railway compartment with a bundle, and much to the surprise of a beautiful but villainous-looking man who is the only other occupant. That is the prologue.

The scene opens in Moscow in the Circus, where she is being shot from a cannon, managed by the same man, among the thundering applause of the audience. She takes the opportunity of singing and dancing a rather unsuccessful imitation of the usual Hollywood step-dance and croon. Her efforts are technically so appalling that I doubt whether any Hollywood producer would give her a showing, not to speak of a job.

The "social problem" is revealed when one sees that the contents of the bundle was a black child, of which she is ashamed, and her Impresario tries to blackmail her into loving him by threatening to expose this fact. A beautiful young artiste, who has been engaged by the Circus, falls in love with her, jealously watched by the Impresario. The Impresario is a German, and in order to accentuate his weak and empty character he wears a rubber pad shoulders and chest which is inflated with a bicycle pump for every performance. He is terribly "unsympathetic." The Director of the Circus wants to get rid of this couple, and the young inventor who wants to marry his plain-looking daughter, constructs a cannon, an improvement on the German one, with a view to replacing the previous number as soon as the contract ends. The heroine Orlova writes a letter to her lover, asking him to come to a rendezvous. The letter is stolen by the Impresario who threatens to expose her. The heroine disguises the director's daughter in her own clothes, but the Impresario notices the subterfuge and comes rushing back to the Circus at the moment when the great Cannon Act is about to take place. He produces the black baby to the public, and is squashed, kindly but firmly, by the militia men who explain to him that in the U.S.S.R. every woman has the right to get babies, be they black, brown, yellow or even blue and green, if she likes to.

An attempt at a Hollywood revue, with very skilful photography at times, particularly in the Circus scenes, seems comic for the onlooker from Western Europe because it is so pathetic in its attempt to copy Hollywood productions. "The constructor," who is supposed to be a comedian, acts in precisely the same way as amateur actors who want to be funny, but only succeeds in boring his audience.

In order to justify this attempt at lighter film "menu" the social problem is introduced and the way it is done is crude and platitudinous in the extreme.

Esther Schub was sitting in front of me. I went to her after the performance, which took place in the Dom Kino (Cinema House) in Moscow, and I looked at her and said: "Well," and she looked at me with a very sad face and said, "Well," and that was the general feeling of the serious spectators.

I am certain that this film is going to be a success, that the theme song "Lullaby" will be sung by everybody in Moscow and perhaps in the U.S.S.R., but to me it was depressing to see this misbegotten attempt at a Paramount Parade produced in a country which was leading the world to a new era in cinema.

"PARTY TICKET"

Director: Pirieff

When I told Eisenstein and Pudovkin that I had seen "Party Ticket" directed by Pirieff, I saw a look of uneasiness coming into their faces. Of all the unfortunate film concoctions that I have ever seen pretending to deal with social problems, this was about the worst. All the worst elements of western film technique had been rallied to the aid of this film. How an audience could sit through what seemed to me at least 20 reels is beyond my understanding.

It was a story of three workers in a factory which existed for no particular reason, inasmuch as one never could see what it was really producing. The one is the good boy who loves his girl colleague. He confesses his love during an outing on a boat in Moscow. In order to arrange this the director coincides the boating love affair very successfully with the 1st of May and illuminates the resulting scenes with fireworks and music. The bad man of the film, who bears all the marks of unbearded villainy, visits a hut in the dark. There he finds a woman who has not even the time to present him with a salt herring when he has already been ejected through the door by a man who is obviously very furious. Some time afterwards the woman manages to escape and hand him the herring which he gnaws ravenously, leaning against a tree. In this situation he is found later on in the night by the young lover who gives him shelter and finds him work in the factory. The hero proposes to the girl who refuses him, because she apparently has been listening to the other one playing the guitar and singing melancholy songs at all possible and impossible moments.

The villain swindles his way into the Communist Party and is later on found out to be the son of a Kulak. He pinches the Party Ticket from the girl shock brigadier, whom he meanwhile has married, tries to commit suicide by fusing the factory, and becomes a hero because it is presumed that he has saved it, and the lover goes in disgust to some far province. He comes back, unmasks the villain, who suitably cringes and is led away by the police.

If one were to show to an unprejudiced audience the scene of the marriage of the villain and the shock brigadier, I am convinced that everybody would say that this was one of the Paramount revivals of films from 1912. The audience around me wept in agony when the Party Ticket was stolen, and the girl was expelled from the Party with the vote of her villainous husband.

I tackled Pudovkin about this film. He said: "Yes, it is a young director and very inexperienced and he has no taste, but I myself must admit that I clutched my breast-pocket from time to time to see whether my Party Ticket was still there."

I saw other films of this type in the U.S.S.R., less pretentious in the get-up but equally absurd and dilettante in their technique. The people I really felt sorry for were the camera men and the technicians who had managed to put up a splendid show. The sound was good, the photography was excellent in many cases, but the actors let loose, with an important director and wild scenario, were hard to bear.

I have the feeling it would have done Shumiatski much more good to come to England and become acquainted with modern documentary film productions instead of going to America and being impressed by monster productions of the play-film type.

Esther Schub and Michael Kaufman (documentary film directors) appeared depressed during an interview, both having been branded as formalists and accused of empty technical trickery without the necessary socialistic content in their productions. They gave me occasion to listen to a long story of how documentary film had been invaded and ruined by incompetent people because they thought it to be the coming fashion, and how they and Dziga-Vertov had been the pioneers of documentary film in the U.S.S.R. and had been branded with the stamp of formalism, together with all the others. "It is quite good that outsiders come from time to time to the U.S.S.R.," said Kaufman, "because they may help to clarify the minds of those who are trying unsuccessfully to impose theories on artists and their productions."

New season's production. Sylvia Sydney in Fritz Lang's first American production (*see page 23*)

Hollywood promises 856 pictures for 1936

NEW PROGRAMME WILL SHOW MORE COLOUR, MORE MUSICAL WESTERNS

American film production begins a new year this month. Sixty-four companies promise 856 feature films for the 1936–37 season. The new year is marked by the expansion of the independent companies. More than twenty new production companies of potential consequence have made their announcements.

A study of the 1936–37 programmes discloses an increased use of colour, but used only where it will do the most good, unlike the promiscuous colour film production of 1930 which had such disastrous effects. It has taken colour six years to make a substantial come-back, and apparently the technical and commercial sponsors are suggesting the use of discretion. At least two dozen films will be made in colour this year.

Stereoscopic films will be made by Paramount for commercial release. They announce a series of six short films, entitled *Classics*, to be made both in technicolour and third dimension.

The use of music will be even further extended, taking a new expression as a background for Westerns. The schedules also show a substantial number of musical features, based more on old musical successes than on stock backstage themes.

There will be no decrease in short production, the trend being rather to an increase.

From the results of a poll among 80,000,000 cinemagoers in America, now being conducted by Warner Brothers to determine the fate of double feature programmes, will come a decision on the demand for shorts.

Cartoons will be even more stressed and Hollywood concedes an expansion in the production of Westerns.

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, inspired by the reception of *Sequoia*, will make a series of short films based on wild animal life; Metro also plans extensive British production. Ben Goetz will be in charge of production and four films have already been scheduled: *Silas Marner*, *Wind and the Rain*, *The Yank at Oxford* and *Rage in Heaven*.

U.S.A. TWITS SOVIET

"The Soviet drama is now passing through a new phase—a phase of yet more pointed ideological and essential militant sharpness—logical, natural and rich in fertilising possibilities for the cinema," declares Sergei Eisenstein, as reported by *Motion Picture Herald*.

"Over here the best bets are Mickey Mouse and Shirley Temple. They'll fertilise any American box office."

Does the Public want longer programmes?

Warner Brothers Pictures is making a nation-wide survey of America to determine what cinemagoers prefer in their programmes. The current tendency in film production is towards longer pictures which will preclude the running of two story films in each programme. Warners want to find out whether films like *Anthony Adverse*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Mutiny on the Bounty*, running a hundred or more minutes, supported by newsreel and shorts, make the best type of programme.

The eighty million American cinemagoers are being questioned on this problem. It has been one of the most perplexing trade questions of the last twenty-five years.

If the American public decides against the two-feature programme, longer feature films will be an immediate result, thus enabling the large companies to proceed with the filming of the classics which require lengthier footage than the average dramatic picture.

The survey will not be for the purpose of approving or disapproving double feature programmes, but an impartial attempt to learn the mind of the public. Every interested person will be invited to present an opinion. Film critics of 2,000 daily newspapers will be asked to report the attitude of their readers and to invite frank expressions from them. Representatives of high school and collegiate papers will also be questioned. The co-operation of members of approximately 1,000 social and civic organisations will be sought.

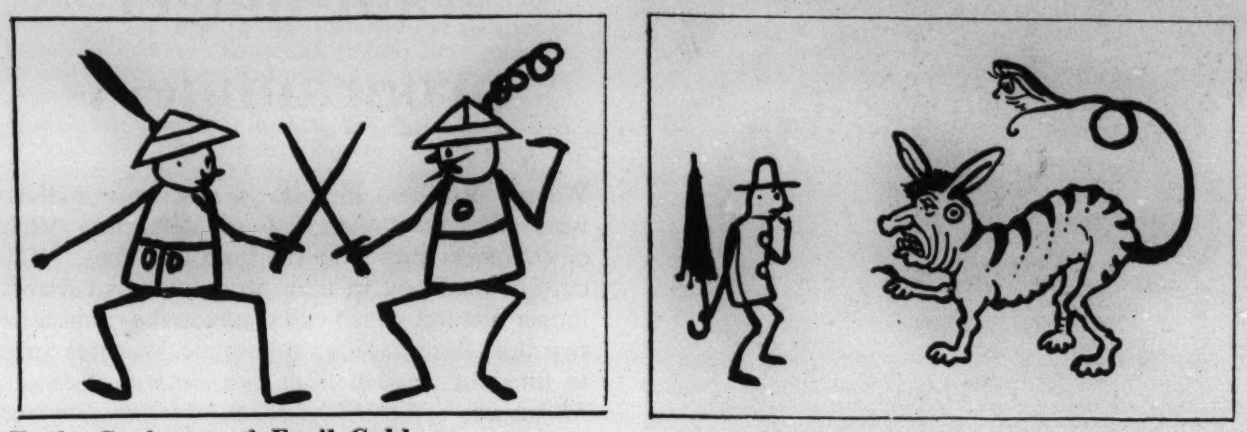
"Film producers are severely handicapped because of their lack of knowledge as to whether they must limit their films to an absolute maximum length, suitable for double feature programmes," the Warner management is reported to have said.

"Significant, perhaps, is the fact that the running time of the ten best films in 1935 averaged 106.1 minutes," Warners pointed out, adding: "By contrast, the running time of 545 films averaged 72.5 minutes. Thus the 'ten best' pictures proved more than 46 per cent longer than the average film. Whether this reflects a strong public approval of longer pictures is not certain."

An American film critic on the radio has been conducting his own inquiry. The opinions of listeners which have already been obtained favour the single feature programme along with variety or shorts.

The problem in Britain has been greatly aggravated by the current practice in certain cinemas of cutting the long pictures in order to fit two story films into one programme. One cinema operator, writing to the trade press, complained that the theatre owner often made him cut out as much as two reels (twenty minutes running time). Provincial cinemagoers should watch this practice and report cases, as it is illegal and against the interest of the public. It allows the exhibitor to be the final arbiter on the form of a film.

COLOUR AND CARTOON



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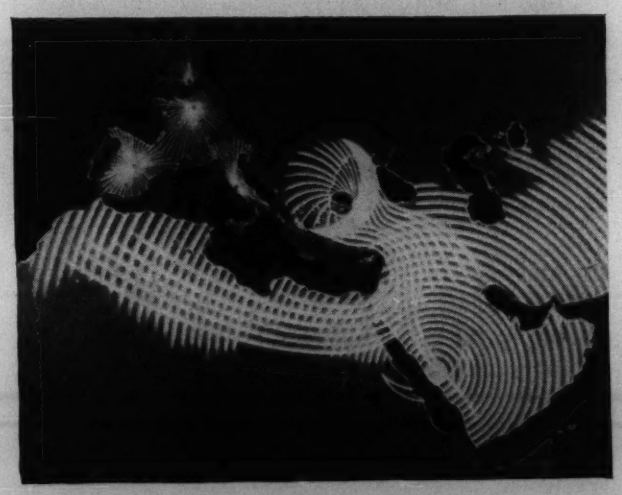

From "Arabia and Islam"

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M. S.

From "Night on the Bare Mountain."

Secrets of Trick Films Disclosed

"Our method is the reverse of cartoon pictures. We do not need many drawings, but a single picture which we constantly transform."

So said Alexeiff, the Russian artist and his American assistant, Clare Parker, when interviewed in Paris by "W.F.N." It is two years since they completed their first picture, "Night on the Bare Mountain," which they made independently in their Paris studio. Previously they were engravers.

Alexeiff's most interesting illustrative work, which he considers to be interpretations rather than illustrations of his subject, is a French edition of Poe's "Fall of the House of Usher," and Gogol's "Diary of a Madman" published in London by the Cresset Press in 1929. Already in these engravings the mysterious and fantastic style characteristic of the film is evident.

"I wished," said Alexeiff, "to find a means in cinema of escaping from the flat tones and black lines of cartoon, and to reproduce a greater variety of shades, depth of tone and perspective."

To achieve this idea, he and Miss Parker invented a most ingenious device—a screen three by four feet and a centimetre thick, which at first sight looks like black velvet on which a picture has been traced. In reality it is a steel plate perforated with half a million holes into which Mr. Alexeiff and Miss Parker have stuck the same number of headless pins. (It took them six months.)

A light at each corner of the screen, and placed at an angle of 60 degrees from the surface, causes each pin to cast four shadows. From these shadows a series of pictures are formed. When the pins are pulled out to their maximum, the re-crossing of the shadows produces a dense black; if a group are pushed half way in the tints gradually become lighter: when pushed in flush with the screen patches of white appear. Thus by merely touching the needles with a small metal roller it is possible to change the expressions, movements and form of the figures and produce a picture with as infinite variety of tones as an engraving.

The remarkable melting effects in "Night on the Bare Mountain" that caused much speculation as to the method employed, are gained by moving the lights backwards and forwards and up and down over the screen, so that it seems to have the quality of moire silk; while simultaneously parts of the picture appear and disappear.

Working without preliminary drawings, although several days may elapse between the photographing of one picture and the next, Alexeiff and Clare Parker only alter those parts of each picture which must appear in motion, the immobile background and the other figures not requiring to be redrawn as in most animated cartoon work. They have also found that this system of working on a single picture makes it possible to move shaded objects, a thing hitherto impossible because the exactitude necessary for reproducing shading in a series of drawings could not be obtained without a certain amount of quivering appearing during projection.

Alexeiff believes that his invention gives almost unlimited scope to the artist; while it can be as easily used for ordinary cartoons as for highly imaginative three-dimensional drawings. As it is also possible to animate a still, the method can be introduced into a film taken from nature without any visible break into trick film, an experiment which was made by Alexeiff some time ago in a story picture.

M. S.

Fox hunting on Great West Road

The problem of how to express the rapid movement characteristic of life to-day is one of the major concerns of modern painting, and it is this urge for animated work which is encouraging a number of painters to venture into the cinema.

Anthony Gross and Hector Hoppin, who made the cartoon film *Joie de Vivre* in Paris before joining London Films, have now completed *The Hunt*, a cartoon in technicolour commissioned by Korda.

The Hunt is more box-office than *Joie de Vivre*, but it retains the same impression of modernity and speed, especially towards the end, when the huntsmen become entangled in the stream of cars and the traffic lights of the Great West Road. (The fox escapes.)

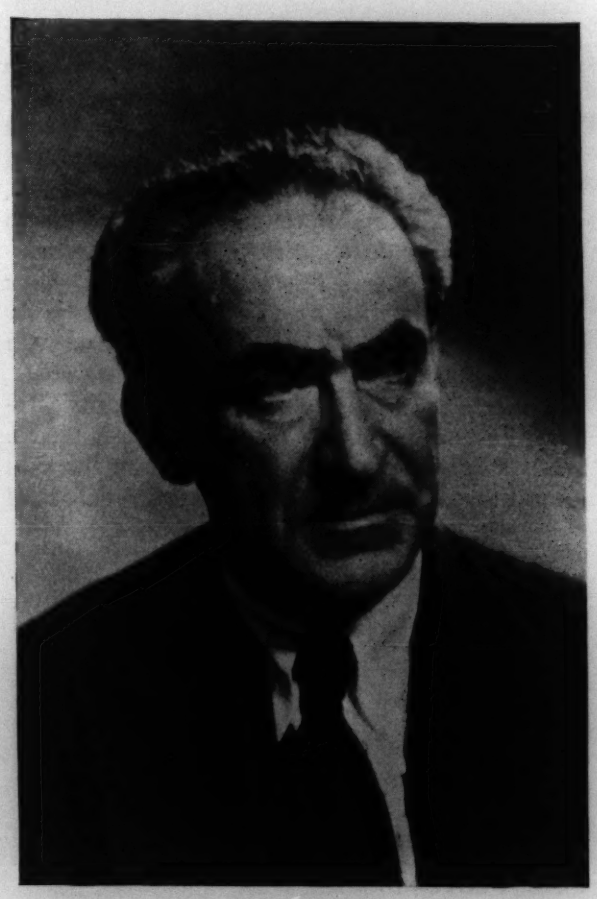
Gross and Hoppin work like painters with simple but sweeping lines. As action becomes complicated so the background is simplified, while the colour becomes increasingly definite.

Elimination should be first axiom in colour photography says Berthold Viertel

I am pro colour-film, in spite of the fact that I have not yet seen a dramatic (realistic) film in colour which I found satisfactory. On the other hand, the Silly Symphonies which have been born out of colour have achieved in it a perfect medium. This fact seems to indicate that operas, operettas, etc., pictures which are outside of realism and drama, belonging to the imaginative and playful *genre*, would be the first to demand colour.

The development may be as it was in sound.

First one was so delighted with the new invention that one recorded every possible sound to a lavish degree. Later on the selective principles began to work. One recorded only sounds of dramatic importance. One differentiated. Here, as in everything artistic, the first axiom is elimination.



Berthold Viertel

the German Director now making films for Gaumont-British.

One will learn by-and-by not to spread colours out as in a patchwork quilt.

The best teacher is a softly shining English morning.

How Nature uses colour in London approaches the problem closer than how Nature uses colour in Naples or Capri.

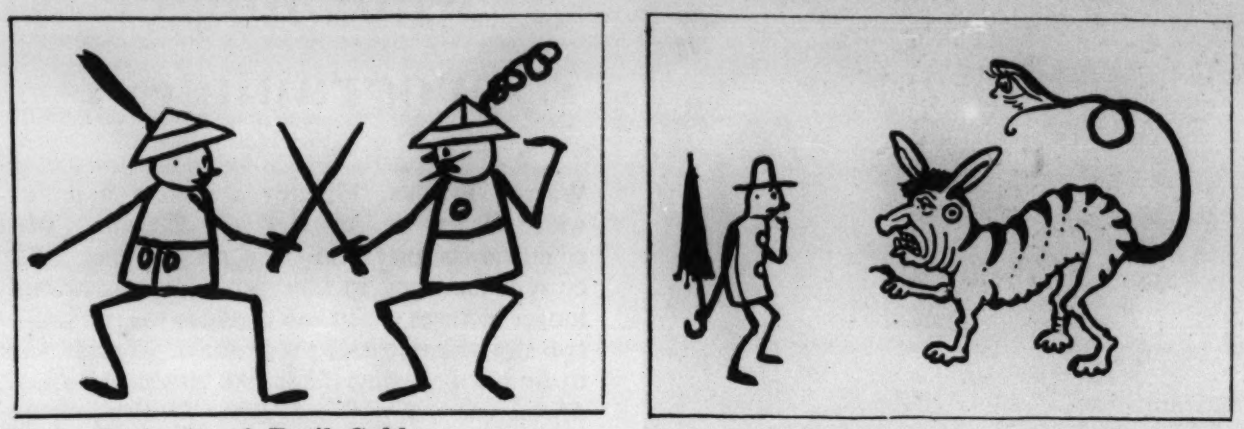
This is only partly a technical question. It is a question of vision, composition, of form.

Briefly: we have learned the scales from black to white.

We will learn the scales of the whole spectrum.

What technicians won't do, artists will.

COLOUR AND CARTOON



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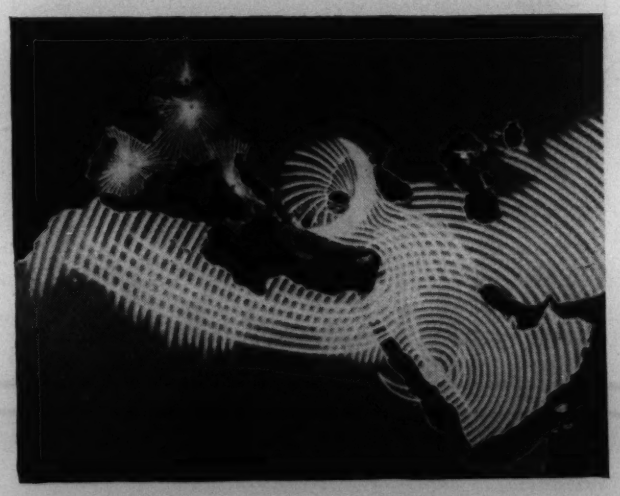

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"Our method is the reverse of cartoon pictures. We do not need many drawings, but a single picture which we constantly transform."

So said Alexeiff, the Russian artist and his American assistant, Clare Parker, when interviewed in Paris by "W.F.N." It is two years since they completed their first picture, "Night on the Bare Mountain," which they made independently in their Paris studio. Previously they were engravers.

Alexeiff's most interesting illustrative work, which he considers to be interpretations rather than illustrations of his subject, is a French edition of Poe's "Fall of the House of Usher," and Gogol's "Diary of a Madman" published in London by the Cresset Press in 1929. Already in these engravings the mysterious and fantastic style characteristic of the film is evident.

"I wished," said Alexeiff, "to find a means in cinema of escaping from the flat tones and black lines of cartoon, and to reproduce a greater variety of shades, depth of tone and perspective."

To achieve this idea, he and Miss Parker invented a most ingenious device—a screen three by four feet and a centimetre thick, which at first sight looks like black velvet on which a picture has been traced. In reality it is a steel plate perforated with half a million holes into which Mr. Alexeiff and Miss Parker have stuck the same number of headless pins. (It took them six months.)

A light at each corner of the screen, and placed at an angle of 60 degrees from the surface, causes each pin to cast four shadows. From these shadows a series of pictures are formed. When the pins are pulled out to their maximum, the re-crossing of the shadows produces a dense black; if a group are pushed half way in the tints gradually become lighter: when pushed in flush with the screen patches of white appear. Thus by merely touching the needles with a small metal roller it is possible to change the expressions, movements and form of the figures and produce a picture with as infinite variety of tones as an engraving.

The remarkable melting effects in "Night on the Bare Mountain" that caused much speculation as to the method employed, are gained by moving the lights backwards and forwards and up and down over the screen, so that it seems to have the quality of moire silk; while simultaneously parts of the picture appear and disappear.

Working without preliminary drawings, although several days may elapse between the photographing of one picture and the next, Alexeiff and Clare Parker only alter those parts of each picture which must appear in motion, the immobile background and the other figures not requiring to be redrawn as in most animated cartoon work. They have also found that this system of working on a single picture makes it possible to move shaded objects, a thing hitherto impossible because the exactitude necessary for reproducing shading in a series of drawings could not be obtained without a certain amount of quivering appearing during projection.

Alexeiff believes that his invention gives almost unlimited scope to the artist; while it can be as easily used for ordinary cartoons as for highly imaginative three-dimensional drawings. As it is also possible to animate a still, the method can be introduced into a film taken from nature without any visible break into trick film, an experiment which was made by Alexeiff some time ago in a story picture.

M. S.

Fox hunting on Great West Road

The problem of how to express the rapid movement characteristic of life to-day is one of the major concerns of modern painting, and it is this urge for animated work which is encouraging a number of painters to venture into the cinema.

Anthony Gross and Hector Hoppin, who made the cartoon film *Joie de Vivre* in Paris before joining London Films, have now completed *The Hunt*, a cartoon in technicolour commissioned by Korda.

The Hunt is more box-office than *Joie de Vivre*, but it retains the same impression of modernity and speed, especially towards the end, when the huntsmen become entangled in the stream of cars and the traffic lights of the Great West Road. (The fox escapes.)

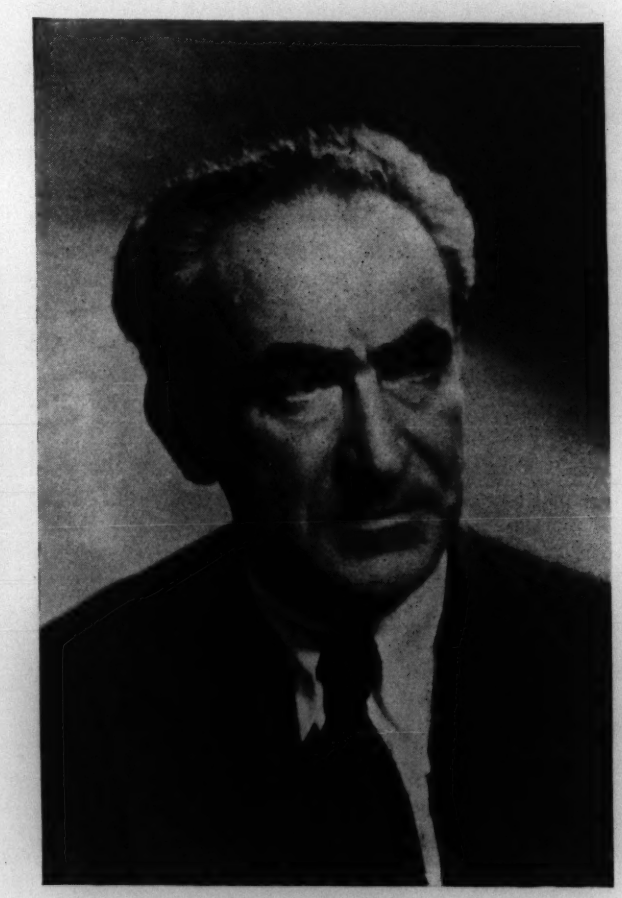
Gross and Hoppin work like painters with simple but sweeping lines. As action becomes complicated so the background is simplified, while the colour becomes increasingly definite.

Elimination should be first axiom in colour photography says Berthold Viertel

I am pro colour-film, in spite of the fact that I have not yet seen a dramatic (realistic) film in colour which I found satisfactory. On the other hand, the Silly Symphonies which have been born out of colour have achieved in it a perfect medium. This fact seems to indicate that operas, operettas, etc., pictures which are outside of realism and drama, belonging to the imaginative and playful *genre*, would be the first to demand colour.

The development may be as it was in sound.

First one was so delighted with the new invention that one recorded every possible sound to a lavish degree. Later on the selective principles began to work. One recorded only sounds of dramatic importance. One differentiated. Here, as in everything artistic, the first axiom is elimination.



Berthold Viertel

the German Director now making films for Gaumont-British.

One will learn by-and-by not to spread colours out as in a patchwork quilt.

The best teacher is a softly shining English morning.

How Nature uses colour in London approaches the problem closer than how Nature uses colour in Naples or Capri.

This is only partly a technical question. It is a question of vision, composition, of form.

Briefly: we have learned the scales from black to white.

We will learn the scales of the whole spectrum.

What technicians won't do, artists will.

The 39 Steps that Shook the World

Finland and Holland banned *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. It came under their category of films of 'criminal excitement.'

* * *

***Good-Night Vienna* ran for three nights only in Stockholm, but proved a success in Copenhagen.**

* * *

Medical films that have been banned for public exhibition in Britain have been allowed into Danish cinemas free of entertainment tax because of their educational value.

* * *

***Thirty-Nine Steps* has proved popular all over the world.**

Legs for Latins—Facts for Swedes

ANY EXHIBITOR WILL tell you that there is no rule of thumb by which a picture can be confidently expected to succeed in any particular area or country. Star appeal and sex appeal are ingredients which never fail—this they know—but nothing else is a surety. And even statistics, such as they are, give very little clue.

Cecil Cattermoul, of London, sends British films to more than twenty different countries, and although he has made no special analysis he has, like most exhibitors, a pretty good idea. He places film taste in two categories—Latin and Aryan.

South America, he explained, will have nothing to do with anything travel, scenic or educational. The peons want 'legs' and will stand for little else.

Spain, although it comes into the Latin category, has no particular taste in films, it seems. *Dick Turpin* proved popular there for the odd reason that the Turpin novelettes are widely read

Cecil Cattermoul

in Spain. The Spaniards like cartoon and colour films and think Pop-eye is better than Disney.

They acclaimed *King of the Damned* the greatest challenge of all to Hollywood; shouted with laughter at George Formby's slapstick in *No Limit*, and trooped in their thousands to see *Passing of the Third Floor Back*.

Malta presents a problem with its simple-minded natives and its not-so-simple-minded floating population. Here music and spectacle are a certainty and Fred Astaire is star-in-chief.

The Dutch East Indies presents a different problem altogether. A strict censorship excludes any films detrimental to 'white' prestige and military and naval films are not encouraged since the recent naval disturbance. In the Dutch East Indies British films have practically ousted German—a fact that Mr. Cattermoul attributes to a fall in the quality of the German product since the Nazi régime and possibly to their loss of some of the better known stars.

Mr. Cattermoul's story of the north countries is much more encouraging from the film-taste point of view. Patrons of Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Norway, Finland will not have their intelligence insulted. Their respective governments sympathise. Films that stimulate 'criminal excitement' are not allowed in Finland, and even *The Man Who Knew Too Much* and *King of the Damned* came under the ban. In Denmark medical films banned for public exhibition in Britain are not only shown but shown free of customary entertainment tax because of their educational value.

The film *Forgotten Men* was considered by the Danes good peace propaganda, and it too was allowed this privilege. In addition the Danish Prime Minister had an introductory speech recorded for the film.

The north countries ask for a strong and logical story and democratic treatment. They will have no horrifics and no gangsters. They like to see real life on the screen and welcome documentaries, industrials and travel pictures. Natural history is box-office and the reception of the British *Secrets of Nature* series has surprised even Britain. They want information, figures and facts, and they demand sincerity.

A recent film, *Snowstorm over Stockholm*, directed by Gunnar Skogland, goes so far as to tell the citizens how much a snowstorm costs them. *Gentlemen in Top Hats*, a Swedish film now being shown in England, is typical of Swedish interest in facts. It gives a pictorial description of Europe before and after the War, and includes scenes of Edward VII. This film has created a good deal of interest in England too and has even extracted a leader from *The Times*.

British humour goes over well in Sweden and films like *Cup of Kindness*, *Plunder* and *My Wife's Family* are popular there. These were, of course, reproduced in Swedish.

Denmark and Sweden cannot, however, be classified together. Danish and French tastes are more alike. While *Good-Night Vienna* ran for only three nights in Stockholm, it proved a success in Copenhagen. Holland, like Finland, is opposed to 'criminal excitement' and also banned *The Man Who Knew Too Much*.

The one universal denominator seems to have been *Thirty-Nine Steps*. It has proved in every country of the world a box-office winner.

Compatriot criticises Garbo

"Greta Garbo is only popular nowadays with very young girls who try to copy her looks and mannerisms," says Miss Maj Johansson, a twenty-three years old Swedish visitor. "We find her too affected and don't like the way she poses as a *femme fatale*. She is far more popular over here, although you *do* make fun of her accent and deep voice! We liked her best in *Christina of Sweden*. The history wasn't too correct, but we enjoyed the film and found Garbo less glamorous and vampish, and more humanly alive.

"On the whole we prefer German films to other foreign ones, perhaps because we all learn to speak German at school."

"How do you like going to the cinema in England?"

"Very much, because I can smoke. We're never allowed to in our cinemas. And then I can see a film any time in the afternoon or evening. In Sweden, picture houses don't open till 7 p.m. when everyone is supposed to have finished work. I prefer the architecture of our cinemas though—it is simpler and more modern."

"Is there any difference in general taste in films between the two countries?"

"We don't have the spectacular revues you seem to love. We prefer stories of modern life with dramatic situations, and one or two really first-rate actors and actresses in them. Then, we have shorter programmes, one feature, a cartoon, newsreel and interest or travel film—that is all we can manage at a time. I find two features in one programme tiring and in . . . in . . ."

"Indigestible, I think you mean."

"Yes, and there is just one more difference. Our cinemas close down altogether for two months in the summer—June and July. We love open air life too much to want to shut ourselves indoors for a couple of hours in lovely weather."

Give the Kids a Break!

Through Mickey Mouse Clubs the children of this country are being organised into regular cinema patrons. Already there are 70 Clubs with a total membership of 125,000 children.

SATURDAY MORNING BELONGS to the children. In south and east London they are to be seen in their dozens, half walking, half running, little sisters and brothers in tow, with purpose in their faces, for the show begins at 9.30. Outside the cinema, the queue is a mixture of toffee apples, peanuts and expectation. Inside the early birds are being marshalled, Mickey Mouse Club members to the right, non-members to the left. Admittance for members threepence, non-members sixpence. But a sympathetic manager gives the laggards a chance. Last minute joiners, frantic with anxiety, seize their four square inches of 'open sesame' and triumphantly join their threepenny colleagues. The moment their threepences are in the till their attitude to the theatre changes. Three thousand strong, they own the place and take complete possession. Even the grandmother is insignificant as she bustles in seizing her unwilling justification by the hand. From the glint in her eye she too has purchased the magic two hours for threepence. They choose their seats like connoisseurs and change their minds a dozen times. The bloods of eleven sit in splendid segregation in the back ready to applaud and hiss as the film deserves.

Every week five London theatres have a total audience of sixteen thousand children and what an audience! Like puppies they are ready to devour anything and everything.

Exhibitors find the choice for children's programmes becoming more and more limited. Westerns and Silly Symphonies with occasional ordinary feature films and news-reels to fill in the gaps. Programme films made for hick adult audiences are still considered good enough fare for children and it is good news that with the increase of the more critical adult audiences this type of film is becoming scarce. The Westerns too are losing ground. Buck Jones, Tom Mix and Tim McCoy are the children's stars and children are sound judges but even with their favourites they are compelled to build up some kind of self-defence. They drown the dialogue with their own and when the hero makes amorous advances to the heroine, the under-eights retire to the lavatories and the bloods in the back seats take a firmer grip of their toffee apples until the blah is over and the next gun drawn.

A children's matinee

"...toffee apples, peanuts and expectation"

Columbia Pictures has compiled ten approved programmes of six reels each for special juvenile matinees. These consist of short subjects only and they have been tried out with success in a number of American key cities.

Each of the films has been carefully inspected with the object of meeting all possible parental criticisms and revisions have been made accordingly. Columbia is co-operating with parent-teacher organisations in their distribution.

These programmes are specially designed for children under ten years of age. The whole scheme is known as the "Happy Hour" plan. The films include comedies, cartoons, sports and colour subjects.

In America, Columbia Pictures are not only alive to this new juvenile audience but are planning to cater for it. Under an entertainment scheme called the 'Happy Hour' they plan to give the children what they want. Programmes are to last an hour and are to consist of shorts, selected from cartoons, comedies, fantasies and travelogues.

All programmes under the scheme must be approved by an authorised committee representing social and educational bodies.

J. H. Seidelman, Columbia's foreign manager, who is now in England, will confer with Joe Freidman, London Managing Director of Columbia Picture Corporation, on the possibility of the 'Happy Hour' scheme being extended to this country. In using short films only, Columbia Pictures have found the answer to the children's problem.

R. I. G.

MEETINGS AND ACQUAINTANCES

BORIS KARLOFF, screen villain and monster in chief, plays a good game of shove halfpenny and a better one of darts. Village inns around Berkshire little know what a sinister person they are harbouring when this tall, distinguished looking man with the charming smile walks in for a pint of bitter and a game with the locals.

Karloff takes his job in a business-like way; has no illusions about great art, but regrets the messing up of good stories like "The Raven" of Edgar Allen Poe.

He was one of the founders of the Hollywood Guild of Screen Actors, which is just tying up with English Equity, and is an active member of the Executive. The present tendency of the big companies to merge, he says, makes the Guild doubly necessary for safeguarding the artists' interests.

MRS. NATALIE KALMUS. Blonde, vivacious, a brilliant business woman, has been in the colour business for sixteen odd years in America. Her husband, Dr. Kalmus, invented Technicolour, for which she has been leading lady, designer, scenarist—in fact chief cook and bottlewasher. She is interested in natural use of colour, "Cartoons aren't life itself," she says. Mrs. Kalmus, who is now at Denham watching over New World Pictures' all-colour *Wings of the Morning*, sees the world, visible and invisible, under the influence of colour. The planets give forth rays of different colours. (One astrologer discovered Mrs. Kalmus to have been born under the protection of seven planets.) Hence her colour vibrations. Colour can cure diseases—soft colours pacify spoilt children—and so on.

Favourite colour—all shades of orange. It is so energising.

JOSEPH KESSEL. Noted French novelist, who has seen many of his books made into films that suffered at the hands of script-writers, recently collaborated with Litvak on a new version of *L'Equipage*—his best known work. The film was a great success. Hollywood discovered Kessel, who divides his time between the French and American films.

Kessel has been in London on holiday preparatory to starting a new novel. He told *W.F.N.* that *Mary de Cork* will be filmed with his collaboration in Paris. Subsequently he will write the scenario for the Hollywood version of *Wuthering Heights*, starring Charles Boyer.

ANDRÉ DERAIN, one of the greatest living painters, has followed up his magnificent ballet-designs for Diaghileff's *Boutique Fantasque* and the de Basil *Concurrences* with a staggering décor for the new Blum-Fokine ballet *L'Epreuve d'Amour*.

In Paris recently, at the Coupole bar, Derain talked to Grierson and Cavalcanti about the present-day commercial film (which he hates) and signified his desire to work seriously for cinema. He has strong notions on colour, and also a number of original subjects for films. One is about the Pool of London—and would make the film magnates sit up if by any chance they knew who Derain was.

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REVIEW OF REVIEWS

Edited by H. E. BLYTH

THE MARRIAGE OF CORBAL. (Karl Grune —G.F.D.)

It is not enough, if you want to make a serious film, to take a story, split it up into so many sequences which explain it, string them together so that they become an illustrated novelette, and call it a day.

—Connery Chappell, *Sunday Dispatch*

Good entertainment in a well-made, well-acted and strikingly photographed adaptation of novel by Rafael Sabatini. The settings are excellent, and the atmosphere of excitement and suspense is well maintained. General appeal: excellent. —*The Era*

The dialogue is the worst I have heard these twelve months, the scenario the silliest, and as for the acting—let me be charitable to Mr. Hugh Sinclair and the young "dumb" newcomer, Miss Hazel Terry, and put some of their faults down to Herr Grune and his international assistants.

—Graham Greene, *Spectator*

THE GREAT ZIEGFELD. (Robert Z. Leonard —M.G.M.)

An enormous monument to bad taste. And the musical movie to end musical movies. Miles of production numbers that look like they came out of the discard files. It took stupendous gall to present this as a super-special. It could have been a great caricature of the wasteful and vulgar Ziegfeld era, but the producers seem to believe that the jewel-flinging bill-dodger presented in their film is a praiseworthy character.

—Meyer Levin, *Esquire*

The picture runs three hours, and is the most lavish display that the screen has had to offer. Its chorus numbers are gigantic and effective. The stairways down which the beauties pace, as they did in the later *Follies*, reach heights on the screen that could never be attained on any stage, but which would have surely been endorsed by Ziegfeld. Probably this style of mammoth numbers is already somewhat out of date, but then it is proper that this film should be a period piece of Broadway history.

—John Mosher, *The New Yorker*

IT'S LOVE AGAIN. (Victor Saville—Gaumont British.)

An English song and dance picture, remarkable for the silliness of its plot and the childish charm of its heroine, Jessie Matthews.

—Mark Van Doren, *The Nation*

The British have taken another of their sober little dips into musical-comedy films, with *It's Love Again*. Massing together all the extras in the Empire, they have worked several big scenes into *It's Love Again*, which is supposed to mean that they have been unpatriotically taking lessons from Hollywood again. But the best moments in the movie are the songs sung casually by Jessie Matthews, and these are lively enough. The comedy is cumbersome, with very British stuff of the kind we don't understand over here at all. It's just embarrassing to Yankees and their kin.

—John Mosher, *The New Yorker*

Entertaining sequence of singing, dancing, love-making and farcical humour. Elaborate dancing scenes staged lavishly with wide variety of settings. Amusing dialogue: superb photography: flawless recording. —*The Cinema*

The Month's Best Criticism

THE MARRIAGE OF CORBAL.

Since Mr. Korda discovered his formula for putting a certain sparkle into British films, so that our best could be likened without shame to the ordinary run of American movies, and now that we have all become convinced that British documentaries are the top, we have tended to forget how deplorably bad, on the whole, the films of this country still are. By the easy expedient of hardly ever seeing a British film and of appreciating the ones we do see as wholeheartedly as patriotism checked by conscience will allow, we contrive to suppose that British films really aren't so bad. Anyone who clings to this comforting illusion—which it has taken us some years, after all, to acquire—should carefully avoid the picture under review.

It may be objected that to call this "a typical British" film is unfair—but the profusion of its accents, the uniformity of its dullness, its ridiculous staginess, make it all too typical. Our big films, as opposed to the negligible easy-going farces produced for home consumption, usually achieve their peculiar white-elephantine proportions of incompetence by international means. Too many cooks of any one nationality—even English—could not spoil a well-meant dish so thoroughly as this story by Rafael Sabatini has been spoiled. It needed a babel of incomprehension to produce romanticism so *rate*, sex-appeal so *kitschig*, drama so boring, and dialogue so bum. Messrs. Noah Beery and Hugh Sinclair struggled manfully in this welter of mis-direction, and Miss Hazel Terry kept a stiff upper-class lip in the face of absurdity; but their united efforts could not alter the issue. This year was bound to give us a British film even worse than *The Tunnel*; and here it is.

—John Marks, *The New Statesman & Nation*

LIMELIGHT. (Herbert Wilcox—G.F.D.)

Along with Anna Neagle, who plays the part of the chorus girl who makes good, Tracy sings his way through a flipperty backstage story, in which dowagers cluster round stage doors like tortoises and enchanting women leer down on the crooner from the stage box. You know, and I know, that the theatre is a dull place, where people work, and then have no time to do anything but start work all over again.

—Connery Chappell, *Sunday Dispatch*

It is the best-drawn picture of life behind the scenes yet put over by either British or American producers. It has no star actresses living in ornate suites of rooms half the size of the Albert Hall. There are no flashing limousines rolling up to the stage door, and no temperamental stars behaving as the most temperamental opera *prima donna* never dreamed of doing.

—S. Rossiter Shepherd, *The People*

SHOW BOAT. (James Whale—Universal.)

Helen Morgan, Paul Robeson, and Charles Winninger are back where they belong, in *Show Boat*. Never have I seen a musical show so satisfactorily and intelligently adapted. Mr. Whale has not slighted Mr. Kern's music, as he might have done, nor has he distorted Miss Ferber's story with any notions of the Coast. From story to song, and back again, the film passes with sure ease. Fine as the material is that Mr. Whale had to deal with, wise men of the profession have had as good—or, perhaps almost as good—and have muffed hopelessly the blending of the stage work with the new medium. Hollywood may be a strange world, but it has done very well by Magnolia and Ravenal and shrewish Parthy (Helen Westley) and "Ol' Man River" and "Bill" and "Can't Help Lovin' dat Man" and the Mississippi and even poor old Chicago. —John Mosher, *New Yorker*

Six years ago, film director James Whale left this country for the United States. Britain's film chiefs were unaware of his departure; anyway they didn't care.

It is a big, untidy, rowdy show, full of bustle and obvious sentiment; and as a money-maker it is what the profession calls cast-iron.

—Campbell Dixon, *Daily Telegraph*

SECRET AGENT. (Alfred Hitchcock—Gaumont-British.)

It is all a great pity; a pity because of the immense wasted talent of Mr. Peter Lorre, and because Mr. Hitchcock too has talent. How unfortunate it is that Mr. Hitchcock, a clever director, is allowed to produce and even to write his own films, even though as a producer he has no sense of continuity and as a writer he has no sense of life. —Graham Greene, *The Spectator*

The trouble about Hitchcock films is that they are too far apart. After *The Man Who Knew Too Much* we waited with undisguised impatience for *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, and, having digested its thrills, we had to put up with a gnawing emptiness for a long time. *Secret Agent* is typical Hitchcock; he has taken Somerset Maugham's novel "Ashenden," strained through the sieve of his individual mind, and subtracted the meat to make a stimulating broth of his own concoction.

—Ian Coster, *Evening Standard*

NEXT TIME WE LIVE. (Edward G. Griffith—Universal.)

I wonder if you remember an old masterpiece called *The Crowd?* Something of that ordinary-folks reality, but not all of it, informs this story and makes it moving. At times it positively hurts. And the pain of realism never did a moviegoer any harm. —Stephen Watts, *Sunday Express*

I find it rather hard not to overpraise *Next Time We Live*, which is not important, not startingly original, not even very good cinema, but gave me personally a good deal of pleasure. Some of it is unclear, and none of it is new, but it touches on the little, poignant, commonplace things of life quite sensitively, and keeps you interested beyond their merits in the tiny problems of everyday.—C. A. Lejeune, *Observer*

Review of Reviews *(continued)*

WALT DISNEY.

Who Killed Cock Robin? is, I am sorry to say is flat, a vulgar job, and what is worse from an artist's viewpoint it is an inferior job of draughtsmanship. *Pluto's Judgment Day* is not so vulgar, but just as blatant, and—which is possibly the worst sin of all—rarely funny. From the time of *Mickey's Gala Première* onwards Disney has been infected by a new and somehow morbid zeal for social protest, not so far removed from the sort of thing that makes people with a lesser sense of draughtsmanship scribble on fences with chalk.

—C. A. Lejeune, *Sunday Observer*

In *Mickey's Garden* Walt Disney again creates nightmare. Inadvertently inhaling some insect powder, Mickey shrinks to insignificance, and with great fertility of ideas and colour, Disney shows the smaller microbe's view of the insect world—a jungle inhabited by fierce and grotesque giants. At this rate, his films will soon be unfit for children under sixteen.

—Henry Adler, *New English Weekly*

THE MAN WHO BROKE THE BANK AT MONTE CARLO. (Stephen Roberts—Twentieth Century-Fox.)

And the bank wasn't the only thing that was broken. My heart was nearly split in twain that anyone should try to make a film out of such a poor story. With the Albert Hall scene in mind, I could not help but wonder what Hitchcock would have done with the scene at the baccarat tables. The whole thing was much too aloof to create any tension, even when Colman staked all his winnings. —*The Isis*

Victor McLagen in "Professional Soldier"

LAW OF THE JUNGLE. (Carveth Wells—Wardour Films.)

Mr. Wells scorns the use of elaborate studio equipment and in this case had only a small hand camera which was operated either by himself or by his native assistant. We do not know just how much of the film each was responsible for, but their combined efforts have produced photography which for the most part is indifferent and on occasions really bad. The completed picture resembles nothing so much as a tattered scrap-book from which some of the pages are already missing. —*The Times*

It is my object to show that the popular idea of "darkest Africa" is absolutely wrong and the result of the enormous library of books on Africa that describe conditions in the Belgian Congo and then brand the whole of Africa with that most misleading "darkest."

—*Carveth Wells*

ANNA KARENINA. (Clarence Brown—M.G.M.)

It does by the sheer competence of the actors succeed in telling a very sad, if bewildering story. And anyway this is the first time that an ex-editor of *The Isis* (Gyles Isham) has kissed Greta Garbo.

—*The Isis*

THE KING STEPS OUT. (Josef von Sternberg—Columbia.)

The lovely and golden-voiced Miss Grace Moore has stepped lightly from the pedestal of grand opera to the frothy stage of Viennese operetta in her new picture *The King Steps Out*. P.S.—You may remember that Miss Moore threatened to leave Hollywood because she had to spend an entire day in milking a cow and singing during the making of *The King Steps Out*. After all that furore, the cow-milking scene does not appear: it must have been left on the cuttin'-room floor. *Sic transit gloria* bossy.

—Frank S. Nugent, *New York Times*

THE TRAIL OF THE LONESOME PINE. (Henry Hathaway—Paramount.)

In *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine*—which tells the story of a feud between two primitive families in the hills of Kentucky—colour is used merely to put real landscapes vividly on the screen. But it does this well enough to arouse occasionally those gasps of surprise with which the spectator might greet a suddenly revealed view of an exceptionally opulent sunset. It will be popular because thousands of people, leading dull grey lives, are hungry for colour—simply for colour; which means that the provision of adequately rewarded opportunities for the artist in the film industry is largely a social problem, for a public whose human needs are starved will want realistic food substitutes, not art, on the screen.

—Charles Davy, *London Mercury*

The Trail of the Lonesome Pine is epoch-making. I am certain that if I saw half-a-dozen films of this quality in quick succession my delight in the black and white films would be seriously diminished. It is a superb production. It leaps forward in a new film art form. It is out-of-doors beauty. The glowing enchantment of nature is brought to the screen.

—Sydney W. Carroll, *Sunday Times*

It is just bad bright picture-postcard stuff, and a still would disclose how crude.

—Graham Greene, *The Spectator*

It's Love Again

DANGEROUS. (Alfred E. Green—Warner Bros.)

A second-rate picture with first-rate trimmings, the fundamental absurdity of *Dangerous* is partially disguised in the suave dialogue written for it by Laird Doyle and by the presence of Bette Davis, currently Hollywood's No. 1 impersonator of *femmes fatales*, whose wicked eye-poppings outdo those with which she made her reputation in *Of Human Bondage*. Typical shot: Franchot Tone muttering, "It can't go on like this." —*Time*

There is not a lot of action in the picture—it is definitely a conversation piece—but the acting is so good all round, the dialogue so well written and the direction so sensitive and clean cut that one does not notice the lack of pictorial development. —*Picturegoer*

THE LITTLEST REBEL. (David Butler—Fox.)

Those who are given to the study of such things may have wondered why it is that at a time when so much is being talked about the value of sex-appeal and glamour in the cinema an extensive popularity contest should yet reveal a little girl of seven to be top of a list in which Miss Mae West finds herself eleventh and Miss Greta Garbo forty-fourth. The story of *The Littlest Rebel*, Miss Shirley Temple's latest picture, amounts to no more than usual, but the period is that of the American Civil War and the place one of those old and rather charming Southern estates which we so often see pictured on the screen, where the negro slaves are always faithful and contented, the master of the house wears a broad-brimmed hat and drinks mint juleps, and the age of hustle is yet unknown.

—*The Times*

I confess to having failed twice in my attempts to remain present throughout a Shirley Temple picture. When the child is natural she is sweet and attractive. She has a naughty little face, caught in moments when the expression is involuntary. But her lines are spoken with a mechanised precocity I find intolerable.

—Stephen Watts, *Sunday Express*

"The Marriage of Corbal"

Anna Neagle in "Limelight"

PETTICOAT FEVER. (George Fitzmaurice—M.G.M.)

Petticoat Fever is an Arctic matrimonial trifle; a rather tiresome little whimsy in blubber. It has the distinction of being the only film I remember in which Miss Myrna Loy has seemed to me almost wholly devoid of charm, and Mr. Robert Montgomery little better than a crashing bore.

—C. A. Lejeune, *Sunday Observer*

A bleak, blizzardly, muffled and mysterious picture, set amid the Arctic Wastes and starring several actors—all practically unidentifiable by reason of their being swathed to the eyes in garments to keep out the cold.

—Paul Dehn, *Sunday Referee*

PROFESSIONAL SOLDIER. (Tay Garnett—Twentieth-Century—Fox.)

I liked the whole improbable picture, especially the scenes of violence and those in which McLaglen tells Freddie of his adventures. Child actors are not everybody's choice. But Freddie puts in a fine bit of work as a young monarch who has to face the firing-squad.

—Gale Pedrick, *The Star*

Professional Soldier should be carefully avoided. Mr. McLaglen does his best, but Master Freddie Bartholomew never begins to act. He never has begun as far as I know. He recites his words by rote in whatever part he plays, and his directors help him to exercise a lustrous and repulsive charm. The setting and costumes in these Puritanian stories have a character of their own: plumes and barley sugar pillars, unbecoming trousers and ornate mantelpieces.

—Graham Greene, *The Spectator*

THESE THREE. (Sam Goldwyn — United Artists.)

These Three is, of course, the screen adaptation of Lillian Hellman's *The Children's Hour*, and quite a good piece of work has been done with this somewhat problematic drama. *The Children's Hour*, as you may know, has to do with the friendship of two young women, a friendship characterised by such emotional under-currents as are not held seemly for screen exposition. The theatregoing public of Manhattan and environs may comprehend such matters, but it is not to be expected that the great movie public would care to hear them discussed, or would understand them if they were. —John Mosher, *New Yorker*

All is natural: feeling has the right air of spontaneity; loyalty the right undramatic note; love the proper emphasis and speech; even at the most intense moments, a naturalness and hesitancy which make it always verbal and never written. In a world of film mediocrity anything outside it is in danger of receiving praise beyond its merits. *These Three* is merely a film of normal adult intelligence. —*The Times*

ANTHONY ADVERSE. (Warners — Mervyn Leroy.)

For many months now, in conversations on the cinema, the film of *Anthony Adverse* has been the subject of amused comment. To those who had read Hervey Allen's immensely long and crowded novel, it seemed impossible to compress its story within the limits of a single film—and foolish to try! Nine books, 1,269 closely-printed pages, hundreds of thousands of words, an ever-changing inter-Continental background, hundreds of fully developed characters: here surely was a mass of material which would defy condensation, a test in compression which made the film treatment of *Crime and Punishment* seem like a schoolboy's précis. Now the film has emerged, and it is no longer a subject for fantastic rumour and comic comment. In so far as condensation is concerned, indeed, *Anthony Adverse*, the film, is a remarkable feat which calls for unhesitating congratulation.

—Forsyth Hardy, *The Scotsman*

FURY. (Fritz Lang—M.G.M.)

This picture is different, volatile, eruptive melodrama. In its class, in which several that are characteristically similar have proved box office attractions, such as *Scarface*, *The Big House*, *Fugitive from a Chain Gang* and *Black Fury*, it is an exceedingly good picture. Basically, it is a grim story of a desperate man and the amazing lengths to which he went to exact vengeance on society. It is absolutely without comedy relief. It has only a modicum of romance, a love interest which in its human interest character is powerful in the manner in which it is made one of the picture's ingredients. The entertainment the show provides is that which is expected of stark melodrama.

—McCarthy, *Motion Picture Herald*

One of the most significant and impressive of screen offerings. —*Variety*

TRUTH BY RADIO BY BERNARD SHAW

I have to speak to everybody, and I never could do that until this wonderful invention of the radio and the microphone enabled me to do it. I know very well that my friend Mr. Wells has told us that when you buy a wireless set you never use it after the first two days, and that here I am, talking to absolute vacancy under the impression that I am talking to millions. But I do not believe that. I always believe and feel that I really am talking to millions.

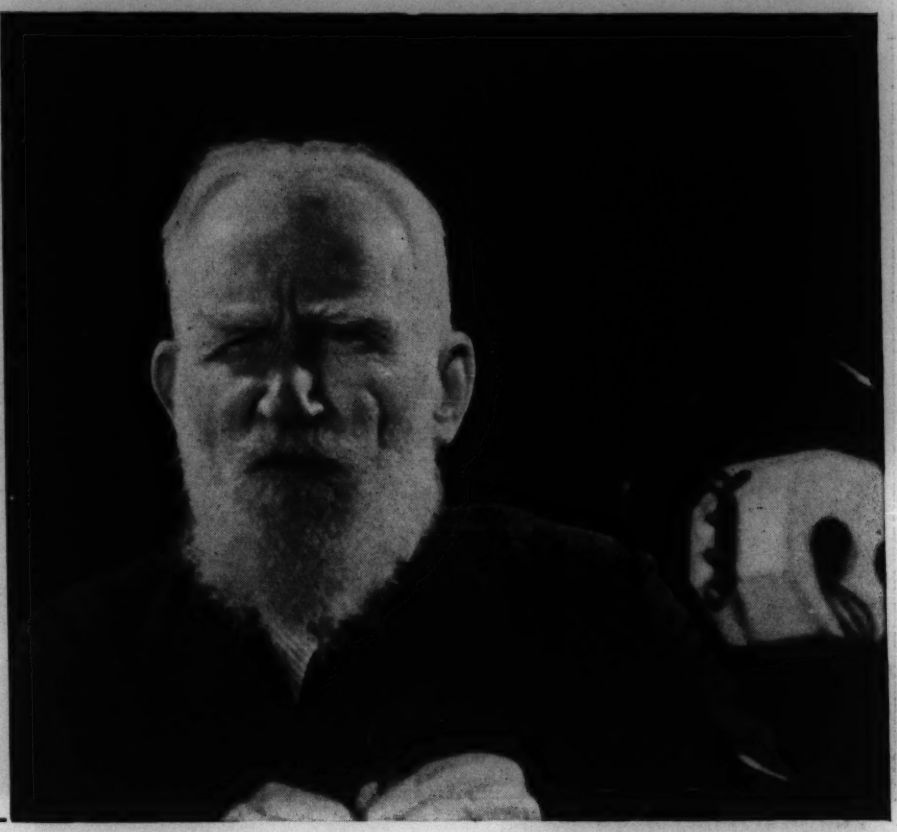
The politicians have not yet found out the microphone. They still imagine that they are addressing political meetings, and they do not understand that the microphone is a terrible tell-tale and a ruthless detective. If you speak insincerely on the platform to a political meeting, especially at election time, the more insincere you are, the more they cheer you and the more they are delighted. But if you try that on the microphone, it gives you away instantly. The sober citizen at his fireside hears nothing but a senseless ranting by a speaker whose pretended earnestness is the result of the extra pint of champagne which has loosened his tongue and fuddled away his conscience and common sense.

If there is anything wrong with you, remember that the microphone will make the worst of it. If you nerve yourself to face it by taking, say, half a glass of whisky, the microphone will convince all the listeners that you are shockingly drunk. I can tell by listening what the speaker has had for dinner.

The microphone tells you other things as well: for instance, where you were born. It brings out and exaggerates your native accent mercilessly. Tones in your voice that the naked ear cannot hear become audible through the microphone, betraying thoughts and feelings that you think you are concealing from every living listener. The preacher who is a hypocrite is unmasked as completely as the Cabinet Minister who is a bunk merchant. When this becomes known, it will raise the moral level of public life. It will raise the character of public speaking. It will even raise the character of our existing platform politicians, who will broadcast not as spellbinders, but as repentant humbugs. Speeches made through the microphone to millions of listeners will take on a necessary sincerity hitherto unknown. If the speakers are insincere or pretentious for a moment, they will be found out and despised. And it is not very pleasant to be found out. I will go on so far as to say that when all parliamentary orators have to use the microphone most of the Governments at present in power will vanish into private life with badly damaged reputations.

I do not think this side of the microphone has ever been pointed out before. It is curious: it puts you into the confessional box. It makes you a perfectly different man. When I go away from the microphone and begin to speak to my friends I tell them all sorts of things that I do not believe, because I think it will please them. But at the microphone I know that those of you who have good ears will catch me out every time that I attempt to gammon you. Moral: never listen to great statesmen or great churchmen except through your wireless set.

As a performer at the microphone, George Bernard Shaw is, of course, unique. His mastery of the natural and intimate style gives special value to this analysis. We now publish for the first time a talk given by Shaw for the film "B.B.C., the Voice of Britain." Mr. Shaw has amended the film version for publication in "World Film News."



I TALK TO YOU

BY STEPHEN KING-HALL

Is there such a thing as technique of the microphone? I suppose I should be a bad trade unionist—if there were a Union of Broadcasters—were I to deny the existence of such a thing. I can only say that I am not conscious of such a technique. Perhaps that fact is the answer. When I broadcast I pay no attention at all to the microphone. I talk. I consider it to be the business of the engineers to collect my observations in a microphone and transmit them through aerials. Sometimes they hang a thing in front of me and sometimes, as for example at the world-wide Jubilee broadcasts, they strap a thing like a matchbox to my chest. But whatever they do I just go on talking.

Note that I say talking, and not speech-making or reading. Whom do I talk to? The answer is YOU (in the singular). I make myself believe that you want to hear what I have to say and I try to imagine what you would say to me if you could answer back, and then I answer that question. I don't mind inflicting myself on you like this because I know you can get rid of me by turning a knob.

Of course I have notes because one does not wish to waste time, either mine or yours, and also because I talk on very controversial subjects, and the B.B.C. has to know what I am proposing to say. Even so they have to trust me not to do the dirty on the Broadcasting service (which includes the listeners, the B.B.C. and myself) by playing tricks with my voice. A very simple and harmless phrase on paper can become anything when spoken. Take the case of the sentence:

"I admire Herr Hitler,"

and say it as you would imagine it would be said by a Communist, and by Herr Goebbels, and you will see what I mean. One cannot lie when talking to thousands of people partly because it would be so monstrous to try to take advantage of one's privileged position, and partly because some of them would bowl you out, and then you would be very properly forbidden to come near the microphone again.

I am very interested in this business of rendering a personal service to the public and of being an interpreter of current events. I am about to start an experiment in the shape of a weekly letter to a list of subscribers.

Stephen King-Hall was born in 1893. Entering the Navy at 14, he served throughout the War and retired in 1929 at Commander's rank. During his naval career he published two books, one on the Far Eastern Situation and one on Imperial Defence.

On December 15th, 1928, sceptical of possessing any microphone ability, King-Hall gave his first broadcast. On the way home he overheard a complimentary remark about it, and thereafter took broadcasting seriously. In October 1930, he gave a children's talk called "Here and There" in which he explained in simple form the problems behind some of the political and economic events of the day. The "Here and There" talks have been given weekly ever since.

VOX POP PUTS AMERICA ON THE SPOT

by Isaac James

"O.K., Joe, I've got it."

The staccato speech of a crack radio announcer comes through the loudspeakers into thousands of American homes. It spatters on.

"Stand right here, sir, and talk right into the little box. It's a microphone. Don't be afraid, can't bite cha. That's it. You said your name was . . . ?"

"Wilson . . . Frank L."

The voice that replies is gruff and low pitched. It belongs to a man in middle age and just now it quavers. We listeners find it strange to detect nervousness in a voice of such solid quality. But we have no time to think about it. The announcer goes on, relentlessly. Never does a fraction of a second elapse between the end of an answer and the beginning of a new question.

"And you come from . . . ?"

"Well, I live in Miami, but I originally came from Chicago."

"You live in Miami, but you're from Chicago. Good. A sun-worshipper, is that it? Followed the birdies down south? Nothing like Florida bathing, eh, Mr. Wilson?"

"Nothing like it. But . . . er . . . I'm not down for the usual thing . . . That is, I'm in business there."

"Quite right . . . business before pleasure. . . . A good maxim, Mr. Wilson . . . or are you in the pleasure business, hotel, cafe, something like that?"

Mr. Wilson is regaining his composure. His reply is prefaced with a gruntish laugh in appreciation of the pun.

"No, not exactly. . . . I'm in the fruit business . . . wholesale end."

"An orange grower . . . well, this is a pleasant surprise . . . where are your groves, Mr. Wilson?"

"I don't have groves. . . . I'm in the jobbing business. . . . I buy the fruit from the citrus farmers and ship it. . . . "

"Oh . . . the famous middleman. . . . You have a hard life, don't you. You have to 'take' it from the farmer and from the greengrocer as well. . . . I don't envy you, Mr. Wilson. . . . But you must be an expert on citrus fruits?"

"Well, I've been in the business twenty-two years. . . . I guess I've picked up a little information."

"Good . . . then you can probably answer this question. Tell me, why has it been found impossible to preserve orange juice?"

"But that's not true. . . . I sell millions of bottles of orangeade every year. It's absolutely pure and. . . ."

"But that's orangeade. . . . I'm talking about plain orange juice. . . . The drink that begins the day for sixty per cent of the people of this country. . . . It can't be preserved . . . yet . . . scientists and business men have been working on the problem for years. . . . There are millions waiting for the bird who finds the answer. . . . Do you know what the trouble has been?"

"No, I can't exactly say that I do."

"Well, I don't either. . . but one of the reasons given is that the orange juice contains too much water and therefore too much hydrogen. . . . The bio-organisms can't be controlled. . . . There's no way to prevent souring. . . . But maybe that question was too technical. Try this one. Orange is an acid fruit, isn't it?"

Artists of New Radio Feature

"Yes."

"Well, when I eat an orange, is the reaction in my stomach acid or alkaline?"

"Acid."

"No, I'm afraid you're wrong. The reaction is alkaline. . . . But enough of science. . . . I can see by your pretty wife here that you have a good eye for beauty. . . . Can you tell me the name of a painter who became famous because of his pictures of oranges?"

"No, I don't think I can."

We can again detect an uneasiness in Mr. Wilson's voice. Embarrassment rather than timidity is probably the cause this time.

"His name was Sorrolla. He was called the sunlight painter of Spain and his pictures of the Seville orange groves are all considered masterpieces. Look him up. . . . Reproductions of those paintings might sell a lot of oranges. But let's go on. Oranges have a lot to do with health, haven't they?"

"Yes, they have. The doctors say the children must have the vitamins and body building characteristics of oranges . . . why, more than . . ."

"Exactly . . . and the doctor is always right, isn't he, Mr. Wilson?"

"Well, most of the time, I guess. We all make mistakes, but I always say you've got to have faith in someone in a time of sickness and trouble."

"Of course you do . . . and the doctors of America deserve our whole-hearted confidence. . . . But what about socialised medicine, Mr. Wilson, do you feel it's a good thing?"

"I don't quite understand what you mean."

"Well, there's been a movement on for some years to have the doctors work for a state institute of health. They get so much salary a year and in return charge their patients no fees. The idea is to make more frequent and better medical service available to everyone. What do you think of it?"

"Sounds like a good thing for the poor. . . . But I'm not sure it would work out . . . kinda socialistic. . . . I believe a good doctor is entitled to make a good living."

"I see, and you feel he would be underpaid working for the Government. Of course, that's one way of looking at it. Just one more question now and our curiosity will be satisfied. Tell me, when you've made enough money to retire . . . will you keep on living in Florida or will you go back to Chicago?"

Mr. Wilson is on solid ground now. His tone is firm and decisive.

"I'm never going to have enough money to retire. I believe work keeps you alive. The day I quit work is the day I'm going to die."

"That's a healthy attitude, Mr. Wilson. But what I wanted to tell you is that whether you live in Miami or Chicago, in Frisco or in Boston, you can get Carcacola Shaving Soap at your corner drug store. Here's a free tube for you with the compliments of the Carcacola Company . . . and thank you very much. . . . O.K., Joe, take it away!"

The broadcast is over. We have not been listening in on a public torture chamber nor to a new method of proving P. T. Barnum's epigram, "There's a sucker born every minute!" The commercially-minded catechism is a new radio feature introduced last year by a group of bright young newspapermen who thought that Americans might be just as interested in the thoughts, opinions, knowledge and reactions of their fellow-citizens as they are in the so-called entertainment that is usually offered by the large broadcasting chains. Their programme is vernacularly entitled "Vox Pop."

The young men appear in various public places in New York City each Sunday afternoon armed with microphone and a direct wire to the broadcasting studio. The lobby of one of the great Rockefeller Centre skyscrapers is a typical setting for their manœuvres. An announcer goes up to one of the visitors strolling around on a sightseeing tour. He invites him to be interviewed over the air . . . just a few questions . . . ten minutes of his time. The visitor's vanity usually triumphs over his fear and the show has begun.

The questions come thick and fast. They are sometimes nasty, sometimes facetious, serious, deceitful, complicated or extremely personal. The answers vary according to the intelligence of the victim. A young schoolgirl from New Hampshire may show herself to be well-informed, alert, and the proud possessor of a set of mid-Victorian moral standards. A chemist from Indiana may turn out to be slow, muddled, wise about nothing but chemistry, and a firm believer in free love. Mothers betray horrible ignorance of child rearing. Students disclose a keener knowledge of economics than successful business men. Most people don't realise how silly they sound and the announcers are wonderful at "covering up."

The programmes were becoming quite popular when I left America. They had definite appeal to the intellectual sadism of the radio audiences and provided an exciting sequel to the Amateur Hour craze. A man can now sit in his own home and hear his neighbour making a fool of himself. It's fun . . . and amateur sociology.

In Town To-night

BY A. W. HANSON

"IN TOWN TO-NIGHT" tries to give listeners some idea of other people's lives and jobs. It comes under Variety, and its principal aim is entertainment. But if, in the course of over five hundred broadcast interviews with all sorts and conditions of people we have added a sociological reference as well, so much the better.

Each programme lasts twenty minutes. Into that time we have to get as much meat as possible, and at the same time watch the balance of the whole. We therefore work on a basis of six interviews of 2½ minutes each, which with five minutes of music and introductory matter makes up the full time.

Our material comes from three main sources: our own staff, outside contacts, and the daily press. Among those selected for interviews have been people who cannot read, and are totally blind. When we get hold of a promising subject we pump him for his life story, his views on his work and his home, his likes and dislikes, and his opinions on everything we think may interest and entertain. Often a man will talk for two hours about himself and his doings. We have to extract the peak-points of what he tells us, and condense them into 2½ minutes of programme-time.

For that reason we very rarely trust to an impromptu dialogue between the interviewer and the subject on the night of transmission. I say very rarely, for on one occasion, just after Christmas, we did go into the street and ask the first passer-by to come up to the studio and tell how he had spent his Christmas. Five people in succession flatly refused.

The meat of the story extracted, we write it up in interview form of question and answer. If the subject has not broadcast before we take the script to his home and go over it with him, altering the dialogue to fit his natural style.

On the evening of transmission we rehearse each of our six victims in front of the microphone for fifteen minutes. This gives us a chance to eliminate the tendency to 'read' scripts, and also to combat nervousness. At all costs we must replace the 'dentist's waiting-room suspense' by easy confidence; and by the time the red light begins to flash for transmission we have usually succeeded.

Two dustmen before the microphone for "In Town To-night"

D——D INDEED!

"The 100th edition of 'In Town To-night' celebrates one of the most popular activities of the B.B.C. This feature delights us all because we feel that it breathes with reality. No phrase on the wireless brought more widespread pleasure than that of the man who said to his chaperon: 'Take your d . . . d finger off the page. I can't see.'"

The Star, June 6th, 1936.

For more than two years "In Town To-night" has brought people from every phase of life to the microphone to talk about themselves. June 6th saw the broadcast of its hundredth programme."

The producer behind "In Town To-night" is A. W. Hanson. He originated the programme in November 1933, and has built it up into the favourite it is to-day. In this special interview he explains his methods of working.

"Queen Mary" Transmission disappoints George Audit

"We were led to expect something pretty sensational from the 'Queen Mary' broadcasts. Every B.B.C. publication was covered with diagrams, illustrations and write-ups for weeks beforehand. Much money was spent in the preparations. There were over a dozen of the B.B.C.'s technical and programme staff besides Messrs. Roger Eckersley, John Watt and Henry Hall with his band on board. But in the presence of the 'Queen Mary' the B.B.C. behaved rather like the young girl who was so overcome at being presented to the President of the United States that all she could murmur was 'Oh, Mr. Roosevelt . . .' "

At the send-off from Southampton's Ocean Dock the entire impression was given through the commentators. Mr. George Blake was the "catalytic agent" who followed the "Queen Mary" from her launching on the Clyde to her arrival in New York harbour. He is rather inflexible in his style of speaking, but on the whole he managed a difficult job sufficiently well.

Once or twice during the embarkation you were switched over to the microphones placed in the vicinity of the winches, the engine-room and the bridge "to pick up whatever may be going on," but—silence, or only a faint sound above the rushing of the open mikes. What was needed to give you an impression of the life of the liner were the voices of an engineer preparing his engines, of a sailor actually at the winches, of a passenger saying good-bye to his family.

But everything was left to the commentators, and they, like nearly all B.B.C. commentators with the notable exception of Mr. Bowman, never succeeded in making you feel you were in the middle of all the excitement.

It is interesting to compare Paramount's version of the "Queen Mary's" sailing with the B.B.C.'s. In the space of a few minutes the film showed the harbour, the ship, the quayside, the embarkation, a quick tour over the ship's interior, and shots of her moving out to sea. The film even made a better job of the sound—you did hear the winches working and the passengers talking.

The transmissions en route were disappointing. There was certainly John Snagge's peroration on the subject of a British ship with an English captain, a Welsh chief engineer and a Scottish birthplace, but otherwise the material was uninteresting and the quality of the transmissions poor. The B.B.C.'s trouble was that the "Queen Mary" is more difficult to represent as a ship than a Grimsby trawler would be in similar circumstances. A floating hotel is not a good subject for an outside broadcast. But the "Queen Mary" broadcasts will not have been wasted if they teach the important lesson that every subject for an actuality programme must be considered as being suitable or not on its own merits, and in terms of itself.

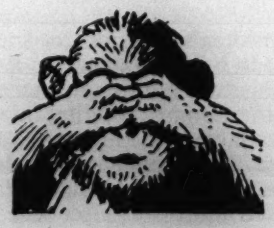
The Three Great Silences of Portland Place

BY I. A. JACOBY

We live, you remember, in an age of specialisation. The chestnut must have slipped from my memory when I cheerfully accepted an assignment to interview the newly appointed B.B.C. television chiefs. Though years have elapsed since I pounded an honest typewriter in journalism's sordid name, the possibility of failure in this task never occurred to me. First of all I have been interviewed frequently and by good reporters, in my erratic career as producer and film director; I thought I remembered their questions. Secondly I am favoured with the acquaintance of numerous individuals associated with what is loosely called the entertainment world; never have I had the slightest occasion to accuse them of reticence, morbid secretiveness or of a passion to steal away by themselves into dark corners. Imagine my chagrin when I must now report to you that I have returned with empty notebook and a profound ignorance of the great spectacles that are about to burst forth on your television screen.

The proposed victims of my reportorial rampage were Messrs. Cecil Lewis, Dallas Bower and Hyam Greenbaum. I boldly tried to reach my prey at Broadcasting House. In the course of the week that followed this effort became a full-time job for my persevering secretary. Our telephone conversation with England's radio centre was continuous and the game continually eluded us.

Notice, please, how I have come to use words like victims, prey and game. I am not, by instinct or talents, a hunting man. Rabbits can perch a



few yards in front of my loaded rifle and jeer at my marksmanship without loss of dignity or life; my reaction at such times is one of injured vanity rather than one of unsatiated bloodthirstiness. But by degrees the proposed interview developed the sanguine characteristics of a chase. When I found I was involved in a man hunt I developed unpleasant faculties and suddenly I remembered having met Mr. Greenbaum at a musical supper given in honour of the great Szigeti. Dishonourably I used my host's name and got through to him. Experienced showman that he is, he displayed all the frankness and cordiality that I had expected. We arranged to meet a few days later at his favourite place of refreshment. I thought that my luck had changed: later I found out that a rehearsing trombonist in his room and my American accent on the 'phone had combined to give him the impression that I represented the *Chicago Daily News*.

The turn of fortune seemed definite the next day when Dallas Bower telephoned in answer to one of the messages I had left at his office. O, Huntsman, has the fox ever walked into your parlour? I rushed to speak to Mr. Bower with joy in my voice and a little list of questions in my hand. But hardly had one of the latter been popped when I realised that success, so close now, was not to be my fate. Mr. Bower thought that the time was premature for talk of plans or hopes or feelings or aspirations. He had "nothing to say about the immediate future of television."

This statement all effacing came, please remember, from the man who has just published a book entitled "Plan for Cinema," forecasting the future, demanding reforms, dreaming of "a special re-creation of activity," revolutionising production, technique and discarding all present values. Naturally it produced a surprised pause in my questioning. And that pause proved my downfall, for Mr. Bower took advantage of the split second and turned me over to a man who must have been standing at his side during our short-lived conversation.

That man I have since come to think of as the most formidable shield in the National Defence. He introduced himself as Mr. Thompson, and told me he was in charge of publicity for the television department. He graciously offered to answer all of my questions, to give me any information I wanted, in fact to tell me all. I explained that I wanted personal interviews with Lewis, Bower and Greenbaum, that I was interested in them as individuals, that I was not seeking an official statement. Alas, that was something beyond the authority of Mr. Thompson. The gentlemen were not permitted to give personal opinions or express personal views. I was politely told that it was not fair to the B.B.C. or to the executives in question to ask them about their own attitudes to the work they are beginning. This was my curtain cue; after all, I have always endeavoured to be fair and square and, furthermore, I am now a grateful guest in a strange land and my ethics are, so to speak, on parade. Moreover, there was something about Mr. Thompson's voice that caused me to believe that mere unfairness would never win me the interview. When our three appointees had joined the television service they must have forsworn their ordinary rights of expression both as men and, what is hard to believe, as artists. Mr. Thompson was seeing to it that they did not cheat the devil of his due.

My last attempt to gain information for this article was made under such defeated conditions. I came to the meeting I had arranged with Mr. Greenbaum feeling something like Mata Hari on her way to supper with an adjutant in the War Office. I found myself wondering about the exact connection between B.B.C. and the Cabinet and about the penalties for espionage or blabbing about the Government's affairs so soon after a Thomas episode. But all hope of treason and sedition were banished when I arrived at the scene. Mr. Greenbaum was waiting for me . . . but so was Mr. Thompson with Dallas Bower safely tucked away behind him.

That meeting shall always be a blot on my reputation as a newshawk. There was the chance for a scoop, for an inside story, for unearthing a hidden secret. And I was convinced by now that the most exciting secrets were concealed all over the place. How I longed for the reporting technique that makes every nonchalant question a far reaching probe, that can twist light comments into significant answers, that is subtle, relentless and scientific. Even the enemy was expecting some kind of show. They sat there, *en garde*, ready to ward off the vicious sorties that, alas, were never to be made.

What happened was that I mumbled my little catechism and Mr. Thompson saved the others all trouble by supplying his ready responses quickly and pointedly. Once when the guardian made a brief excursion to the bar, Mr. Greenbaum confided that he was forming the first Television Orchestra of the World, and that for once sex appeal would be a consideration in the choice of a bassoon player. His voice carried, however, and Mr. Thompson came rushing back with an apprehensive "What did he say? What was that?"

I really should add that Mr. Bower seemed slightly embarrassed by the precautions taken on his behalf for he soon appreciated that he had nothing to fear from my inept delving. When I pointed out the strangeness of his having no quotable views on television ("It's just an experiment now!") although he was selected for his post from a list of hundreds of applicants, many of whom had expressed some very definite ideas, he was fairly bursting to talk. But the regulations were rigid.

Mr. Cecil Lewis never did appear. But if he did I wouldn't ask him a word about his ambitions in the new medium. I am now perfectly willing to believe that no one knows anything about television—least of all the B.B.C. staff. What I would like to have from Mr. Lewis, were I clever enough to get him alone, is a short essay on "Red Tape and the Creative Arts."

U.S. Radio Fights Political Control

BY ALISTAIR COOKE

'I recognise that these words which I have chosen with deliberation will not prove popular in any nation that chooses to fit this shoe to its foot. . . . World peace and world goodwill are blocked by only ten or fifteen per cent of the world's population. . . . In the field of international finance we have, so far as we are concerned, put an end to dollar diplomacy, to money grubbing, to speculation for the benefit of the powerful and rich, at the expense of the small and the poor.' (*Applause.*)

ON THE EVENING of the 3rd January many British listeners, hearing these words in the first news-bulletin, must have joined politely in the roar of applause that went up in Washington. But few could have guessed that the speech would become possibly more famous in the history of broadcasting than in the history of the United States. The applause that the President himself heard was, as Republicans were angrily aware, being echoed to countless millions of U.S. voters. For the second time only in American history the President was making his traditional speech to Congress in the evening—the other time was the momentous extra session of 2nd April 1917; for the first time it was being heard by the electorate.

Determined that the cheering should carry no disturbing echo, Republicans maintained a stolid silence until the last paragraph of the forty-five minute oration. But as soon as the President had said, 'I cannot better end this message on the state of the Union . . .', they emitted what the press dubbed 'a derisive roar,' thus reminding the world at large of their view that the President was abusing for political ends his Constitutional privilege.

When the President had first requested that his speech should be postponed and delivered at a night session of Congress, at an hour when the maximum radio audience could be assured, there was a loud Republican protest, most audibly from Henry P. Fletcher, the Republican Chairman. To soften Republican wrath, the Democratic party allowed a Republican leader to broadcast from the House of Representatives on the morning of the 3rd, an official protest against the Roosevelt precedent. 'Is there going to be anything in that message,' asked the Republican spokesman, 'that will not stand the light of the mid-day sun?' That rhetorical jab was the last objection that the history books may note. But behind the scenes, the protest was being elaborated in a series of letters exchanged between the Republican National Committee and the Columbia Broadcasting System.

With remarkable foresight and good sense*, Columbia has now made this evidence available by reprinting and publishing that correspondence. This twenty-page pamphlet †, costing three cents for postage, is more vital to the future of broadcasting than many more expensive works, a better book on the subject than any this year, the first attempt in any year to define the democratic principle and an ethic for political broadcasting.

MAIN ISSUES OF CONTROVERSY

1. Is the American Radio System under political control, or does it consult first the national interest? The Republicans say 'Yes'—Columbia, 'No.'

2. Is broadcasting to be free for the dramatising and sentimentalising of political issues? The Republicans say 'Yes'—Columbia, 'No.'

The protagonists are: Henry P. Fletcher, Chairman of the Republican National Committee, and William S. Paley, President of the Columbia Broadcasting System. But their dignity was engaged only after a mild, official correspondence about a series of planned broadcasts turned into a discussion of principle and when, presumably to Mr. Paley, the Republican Party seemed to be dictating to Columbia a policy for political broadcasts.

On 13th December the Director of the Republican Party radio division wrote the Vice-President of Columbia asking simply for times and periods on the air to be used for 'such vehicles as the Republican National Committee may in its opinion deem to be proper for carrying the Republican message to the people.' The Vice-President evidently found something in this letter to make him believe that the Republican plans had 'turned in other directions': the Republicans wanted a particular man to write transcriptions—apparently dramatic transcriptions. The Vice-President thereupon concisely stated the Columbia policy followed for the past three administrations, which has been, briefly:—

1. *Not to sell time for political broadcasting until after the regular party conventions next summer, but to give time free, and evenly between the two parties, before an election campaign is on; to sell it after the conventions, when the parties want more time and regular periods too valuable to give away.*
2. *Even after the conventions not to allow* 'DRAMATISATION *of political issues.*'

William S. Paley

He went on to explain the reasons for this policy. On the first point, they felt discussion of political issues to be 'our duty as a public service.' On the second point—'appeals to the electorate should be intellectual and not based on emotion, passion or prejudice . . . the dramatic method would over-emphasise incidents of minor importance and significance,' and American voters would not be able to discriminate fairly among dramatisations, so that the turn of national issues might well depend on the skill of warring dramatists rather than on the merits of the issue debated.

So accomplished a rebuff drew no letter but a telegram, sent on the 1st January, from Henry P. Fletcher direct to William Paley. The argument now begins in formal politeness, rises through a crescendo of peremptory rhetoric and ends with a verbal sword-thrust. It had better be summarised this way:

FLETCHER to PALEY, Telegram, 1st Jan.

You are broadcasting the President's speech to Congress. 'If this be true . . . I respectfully request that your company allot on some closely following day the same amount of time over the same stations at the same hour of the day given to Mr. Roosevelt' for Republican broadcast. 'The essence of American democracy and free speech is fairness. If you grant my request it will demonstrate that you are in no way influenced by fear of the party in power.'

—at this point the courtesies begin to give way to irony—

'The President's decision to dramatise his message and to bring down to the level of a political speech his constitutional right and duty to address the Congress on the state of the Union is understandable in the light of past performances.' Apparent that President considers members of both houses as 'only incidentally his audience' and will be addressing electorate 'as a part of his campaign for re-election.' We request 'equal opportunity.'

PALEY to FLETCHER, Telegram, 2nd Jan.

Have considered letter 'with great care.' You are free to ascribe motives to President's decisions. But we should not be asked 'to base allotments of time on such interpretation by you or others.' The Columbia System has always acceded to requests for any President to address the U.S. It is not 'possible or wise for broadcasting to adopt a mathematical formula of fairness.' Similar demand to editors of newspapers would be almost unanimously rejected. 'We are not under the domination of this administration and we have never been under the domination of any other . . . our record is proof enough.' After President's address we shall be glad to grant Republicans time for reply 'as we believe befits the circumstances.' Columbia 'cannot accept the principle that all broadcast activities of the Government of the United States or its spokesmen are in the nature of political activities and are to be mathematically balanced by similar broadcasts at a similar time by a political party in opposition to the party to which Mr. Roosevelt belongs! . . . I hope I have made it clear to you

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* Such correspondence is, of course, never made public in the case of our own B.B.C. It is understood that members of the B.B.C. staff may not write about the B.B.C. for two years after leaving it.

† "Political Broadcasts": A Series of Letters exchanged between the Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc., and the Republican National Committee. (C.B.S. Inc., 485 Madison Avenue, New York City.)

that we distinguish between the President of the United States and Franklin D. Roosevelt as a candidate for political office.'

FLETCHER to PALEY, 4th Jan.

Reminds Paley of Columbia Vice-President's reply to director of Republican radio division, of 27th Dec., outlining Columbia policy under two heads of (1) not selling time till after conventions, and (2) not allowing dramatisation. 'As the Republican National Committee's plans for the use of radio are completed and time is an essence, I would appreciate your advising me by return mail that the policies outlined in Mr. Klauber's letter are the policies of the Columbia Broadcasting System.'

PALEY to FLETCHER, 8th Jan.

'This is to advise you in reply to your letter of January 4th that Mr. Edward Klauber, First Vice-President of this Company, set forth correctly to you the policies of the Columbia Broadcasting System. . . . I will tell you more completely' some of our guiding principles.

We are required under Communications Act of 1934 to operate as a public convenience. In trying to do this, we sacrifice every year 'hundreds of thousands of dollars of revenue' and do not sell time to any organisation to do exactly what it pleases. 'If anything like programme balance is to be maintained . . . the broadcasting system rather than the user or would-be user must dictate programme policy . . . it is our fixed policy not to sell time for propaganda of any sort. When we think that the public is sufficiently interested in a subject suitable for discussion over the air so that propagandists of opposing sides should be heard, we allot the time without charge . . . it is difficult to define precisely what we mean by propaganda . . . and we rely upon common sense and the editorial judgment of those who operate it. What I mean in a general way, however, is this: We would not, for example, sell time to the public utilities holding companies to agitate against proposed legislation restricting or regulating their operations. We would and did give them time in which to argue against such proposed legislation just as we gave the advocates time to argue in favour of such legislation. On the other hand, if the public utilities wanted to buy time to advertise their goods and services—that is, to promote the use of gas and electricity—we would unhesitatingly sell them available time for such use.'

Therefore we will not now sell time 'to the Republican Party, the Democratic Party, or any other political organisation, until after the conventions. . . .'

FLETCHER to PALEY, 13th Jan.

I do not question right of Columbia to determine its own policies . . . . 'I cannot, however, free myself of the impression that the attitude you have taken is affected and perhaps involuntarily controlled by the political party in power which regulates the issuance of your licenses. . . . I believe your policy will leave in the minds of the American public the distinct impression that you are either exercising an unwarranted degree of censorship or that you fear punitive action by the Federal Communications Commission.' I am told that both the National Broadcasting Company and Columbia cleared the air of all programmes on the night of 3rd Jan. and 8th Jan. for the President to broadcast. 'I assume this was free time and the question arises, was this in the nature of a donation to a political party by the Radio Companies or by the Corporations sponsoring programmes which were displaced by the President's speeches? It seems to me that the services of the great radio chains should be as non partisan and free from governmental domination as are great news services like the A.P., U.P., International News, etc., and give both sides an absolutely equal break.'

Now about dramatisation: Republicans hoped 'before the heat and fury of the political campaign' to 'take advantage now of modern radio technique to convey our message . . . the statement . . . that "appeals to the electorate should be intellectual and not based on emotion, passion, or prejudice" seems almost funny in the light of the impassioned appeal to class prejudice made by the President in his Congressional broadcast on 3rd January. To my mind the use of what you are pleased to call your editorial judgment amounts in practice to censorship.' So long as dramatisations are represented by the announcer as dramatic sketches, there is no legitimate reason for refusing them.

'The two great systems enjoy under the ninety day licence system imposed by the Federal Communications Commission a precarious lease of the great theatre of the air . . . you decline to open the doors of this theatre to those in opposition to the policies of the administration unless your editorial judgment approves the programme to be presented. . . . In view of the public interest in this question of the freedom of the air, I am giving a copy of this letter to the Press.'

PALEY to FLETCHER, 13th Jan.

'You are under a misapprehension in all of your assumptions that the Federal Communications Commission could—even if it would—take punitive action against us for political reasons or that we live in fear of this administration or any other . . . there is nothing in the Federal Communications law which would allow the Commission to act from partisan political motives, and if it did so act its judgments would very promptly be reversed by the Federal courts. Moreover, if this company were subject to such domination by any political party as is implied by you, the American people would be served so shabbily that I should lose all interest in the conduct of this business. . . .

'You have never asked us for free facilities and been refused. What you did ask was for us to assume in advance that an address by the President of the United States to the people of America and their Congress was a political speech, and to set aside in advance . . . comparable time for a Republican answer . . . we made plain to you and now repeat to you that we shall distinguish between the President as President and Franklin D. Roosevelt as a candidate for office.' Since the Presidential message, we have asked you to state your desires for time and you have failed to do so . . . you cannot with justice accuse us of censorship nor should you assail our editorial judgment unless and until you are prepared to cite specific instances . . . these are the facts with regard to our political broadcasts in recent months:

'From 2nd October to 11th January, the Columbia Broadcasting System presented 16 political addresses by Republican spokesmen and 13 by Democratic spokesmen. During this time Columbia made several offers to the Republican party of its facilities for their speakers which were not utilised, notably on 16th December for yourself to summarise results of the National Republican Committee meeting in Washington. From 14th January to 29th January of this year, Columbia has scheduled four addresses by Republican spokesmen and three by Democratic spokesmen. We have, besides, frequently given time to opponents of the President within the Democratic party, to speakers nominated by the Liberty League and many other organisations in general disagreement with the President's policies.

'I am glad to answer your question as to whether or not the time we allotted for the President's speech was a donation to a political party. It certainly was not. It was a donation to the American people. It has always been our policy to make time available for the President of the United States when he wished to address the nation. We followed this policy through two Republican administrations and we follow it now.'

Completely agree that, like press associations, we should give both sides absolutely equal break . . . at the same time I assure you no reputable or responsible press association is run on a mathematical basis under which so many words on a given day are allotted to each political party. The press association follows the breaks of the news and the shifting of public interest from issue to issue. We would not be doing anything but an automaton's job if we tried to run broadcasting otherwise.

No quarrel with your wanting to present issues 'before heat and fury' of campaigning, we will allow ample time but 'we must persist in our refusal to take money for it.' Disagree with you 'flatly' that dramatisations are unobjectionable if so tagged. We do not close doors of 'the great theatre of the air. . . . We refuse to accept money for opening it.'

'I repeat to you . . . we intend . . . to discharge our responsibilities as honestly and as largely in the public interest of good broadcasting as we know how.'

* * *

Pondering this thirteen-hundred word onslaught on the morning of 14th January, the day on which his own party was to make its first speech in the new series given by courtesy of the Columbia System, Mr. Fletcher must have decided to throw in the sponge for the Republicans. At any rate he retired into a cryptic dignity and hopefully replied that day:

'I think our correspondence plants the issue squarely before the American people and I am willing to leave it to their calm and unbiassed judgment whether or not, on the record thus made, your System is not exercising censorship of the air.

'One point in your letter. You say you asked us to state our desires for time and we failed to do so. . . . I felt this concession so unsatisfactory and hedged about that I did not immediately ask your System for time.

'However,' magnanimously concludes Mr. Fletcher in a final paragraph that suggests there had been no correspondence at all, no violent disturbance of the ether, 'in the course of the political campaign, which was opened by the President's Congressional broadcast, I shall hope that Republican speakers will receive comparable time at equally desirable hours over comparable stations, as may be granted to the spokesmen of the party in power. You will receive requests to this effect from time to time.'

* * *

The judgment of this issue may be left, too, to the calm and possibly even more unbiassed consideration of the reader. As a 'discussion' between two types of official mind it is interesting, as a fight between two men in kid gloves it is at least amusing, as a precedent in political broadcasting it is historical.

Henry Prather Fletcher was born sixty-three years ago in Greencastle, Pennsylvania, where he lives to-day. He was educated at Chambersburg (Pa.) Academy, is an LL.D. of the University of Chile, of Dickinson and Lafayette. He was admitted to the bar in 1894, became an official reporter in a Pennsylvania district for seven years. In 1898 he enlisted in 'Teddy' Roosevelt's Rough Riders and served as a first lieutenant in the Philippines between 1899 and 1901. He has been Secretary to the American Legations in China and Portugal, and Ambassador Extraordinary to Chile, Mexico, Belgium and Italy, which last he resigned in 1929.

William Samuel Paley's history is less imposing, if only because he is already only thirty-five. He was born in Chicago and graduated from the Western Military Academy at Alton, Ill., in 1918. Till 1922, he was a student at the universities of Chicago and then Pennsylvania. For seven years he managed the production and advertising for a cigar company. He became President of the Columbia Broadcasting System in 1928 and has remained so since. He controls broadcasting systems in Minneapolis, Chicago, Cincinnati, Washington, Charlotte (N.C.), Atlantic City, and St. Louis.

Many who have few hopes that the Companies' lease of the air can be made more permanent can take comfort from reflecting that, after this correspondence, William Paley's personal lease of 'the great theatre of the air' is likely to become appreciably less precarious.

Radio should exploit its gift for Drama

What can the B.B.C. offer us in the way of radio-dramatic entertainment which is neither actuality nor documentary?

Listen this month to *The Silver Cord* for one example. Here is a good stage play of the second class, adapted for broadcasting. Val Gielgud handles it, so the production is likely to be sensitive, well balanced and lucid. An excellent cast includes Edna Best and Madge Titheradge.

Then listen, later on, to *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*, an adapted novel which you may well find trite, obvious, sentimental. But you will, I would swear, enjoy it more than *The Silver Cord* because, in form, it is so much better suited to radio treatment. It grips the attention instead of demanding an effort of attention.

Why? Because it has a single important character moving through a series of events; because these events take place in chronological order and because they are presented with absolute simplicity. It exploits, in fact, radio's gift for sheer story telling.

It is a serious criticism of the B.B.C. that this gift is so rarely used. Even *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*, is a revival. Since it was first given, a year ago, only one production, *The Nightingale*, has surpassed it in its own style. Nothing else has come near to being its equal.

Were these successes accidental? Why, after a year's experience in a rapidly developing art, have they not been improved upon? G. W. G.

Russians harness Television to Industry

Television's first application to industry may take the form of controlling the movement of shipping on the new Moscow-Volga canal, the great Soviet waterway which will link Moscow with the Caspian, Baltic and White Seas.

The designers are considering the installation of televisors at key points along the canal, with central reception at the main control-point at Dmitrov, 60 kilometres west of Moscow. In this way the engineers in charge will be able to watch the progress of ships and order the opening and closing of the various sluices accordingly.

Should television not be in a sufficiently advanced state when the canal is opened in October 1937, an alternative plan has been drawn up for watching ships' movements by a system of invisible rays playing on to photo-electric cells across the water. A ship entering the field of the ray cuts off the input to the photo-electric cell on the opposite bank, and so indicates its position to the control-point. The system is similar to that used for certain types of burglar-alarms and for "blind landing" at airports.

Besides giving Moscow access to three seas, the new canal will ensure to the city an ample water supply for domestic and industrial needs. Its construction, which was begun in 1932, involves the building of ten sluices and eleven dams. Seven thousand workers are being trained as maintenance engineers.

B.B.C. Events of the Month

Sunday, July 5, 10.15 p.m.: Erasmus Programme (Felton) NATIONAL.

Monday, July 6, 8 p.m.: "Vice Versa" (Producer, Barbara Burnham) NATIONAL.

Wednesday, July 8, 8.30 p.m.: Stanelli's Bachelor Party Anniversary (Producer, A. W. Hanson). REGIONAL.

Thursday, July 9, 11.40 p.m.: Reading. Facts and Lay Figures from Defoe. REGIONAL.

Friday, July 10, 8.15 p.m.: Polish concert from Cracow (Conductor, Fitelberg). REGIONAL.

Saturday, July 11, 4.25 p.m.: A Round of Sport—A.A.A. Championships, King's Cup Air Race, Eton and Harrow match. NATIONAL.

Sunday, July 12, 9 p.m.: Much Ado About Nothing—Stratford Company (Birmingham). NATIONAL.

Monday, July 13, 8 p.m.: B.B.C. Orchestra (Conductor, Constant Lambert). NATIONAL.

Wednesday, July 15, 8 p.m.: B.B.C. Midland Orchestra—Concert of Modern Composers. NATIONAL.

Thursday, July 16, 8 p.m.: The Ghost Train (Producer, H. Rose). REGIONAL.

Thursday, July 16, 9 p.m.: Violin Recital—Arthur Catterall. NATIONAL.

Saturday, July 18, 3.15 p.m.: Davis Cup Inter-Zone Final. Commentary. NATIONAL.

Sunday, July 19, 4 p.m.: Lohengrin Act I, from Bayreuth. REGIONAL.

Sunday, July 19, 5.50 p.m.: Lohengrin Act II, from Bayreuth. NATIONAL.

Monday, July 20, 9 p.m.: Variety Feature. Sydney Howard. REGIONAL.

Wednesday, July 22, 8 p.m.: Harry Hopeful in Teesdale. MANCHESTER.

Thursday, July 23, 10.20 p.m.: Chamber Music. Maurice Cole Trio. NATIONAL.

Friday, July 24, 10 p.m.: Down to the Sea in Ships (first of a series). Introduction by Wynn Thomas. NATIONAL.

Saturday, July 25, 1.25 p.m.: Test Match Commentary. NATIONAL.

Sunday, July 26, 9.30 p.m.: B.B.C. Orchestra. Programme of Early Instrumental and Vocal Music. REGIONAL.

Monday, July 27, 12 noon: Test Match Commentary from Old Trafford. NATIONAL.

Tuesday, July 28, 8 p.m.: Dumbarton Castle—feature programme. SCOTTISH REGIONAL.

Tuesday, July 28, 8.40 p.m.: "The Three Friends" (Producer, Gielgud). NATIONAL.

Thursday, July 30, 8 p.m.: Talk. Ancient Monuments. Rt. Hon. W. G. A. Ormsby-Gore. NATIONAL.

Friday, July 31, 8.30 p.m.: B.B.C. Orchestra (Conductor, Albert Coates). REGIONAL.

Hollywood ready for Television

By our New York correspondent.

Although the development of television on a nation-wide scale is not anticipated before 1937 or 1938, Hollywood is more than ready to meet any such development, according to the scientific committee for the Research Council of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Hollywood's "psychological preparedness" for television, the committee reports, is in marked contrast to the costly "scepticism" which greeted the change from silent to sound pictures.

"The cost of development up to this point may be measured in millions of dollars," the committee pointed out. "Before there is any possibility of nation-wide exploitation, hundreds of millions of dollars must be expended for numerous transmitting stations of limited range, connecting cables of new design, and receivers. None of these things can be obtained overnight.

"There is a possibility of such a development starting in 1937, or more probably in 1938. It should be noted that its scope, as far as we can prevision it, is limited to home entertainment purposes in urban areas."

A new transmitting station in New York will supply about 150 receivers to selected observers, each receiver costing, according to their estimate, "probably several thousand dollars."

The committee, composed of outstanding film technicians, with Carl Dreher as chairman, said that the film industry had "technically trained personnel, capable of following the progress of television and giving notice of impending developments."

German Radio Expert Scores British Film

Karol Rathaus, German composer of the music for *Amok* and *The Brothers Karamazov*, has recently completed the music of the Anna Sten film *A Woman Alone*.

In Germany Rathaus is famous as an expert on the broadcasting of music. His experience in this field has made him believe that microphone technique is still in its infancy. In his book, "Music in Front of the Microphone," he states that the microphone cannot yet be used as a creative instrument partly because its technical capabilities are still primitive, and partly because listening audiences, accustomed to straight reproduction, cannot be rushed into a new conception of music. He compares the present glut of concert music over the microphone to the early use of the camera to imitate painting.

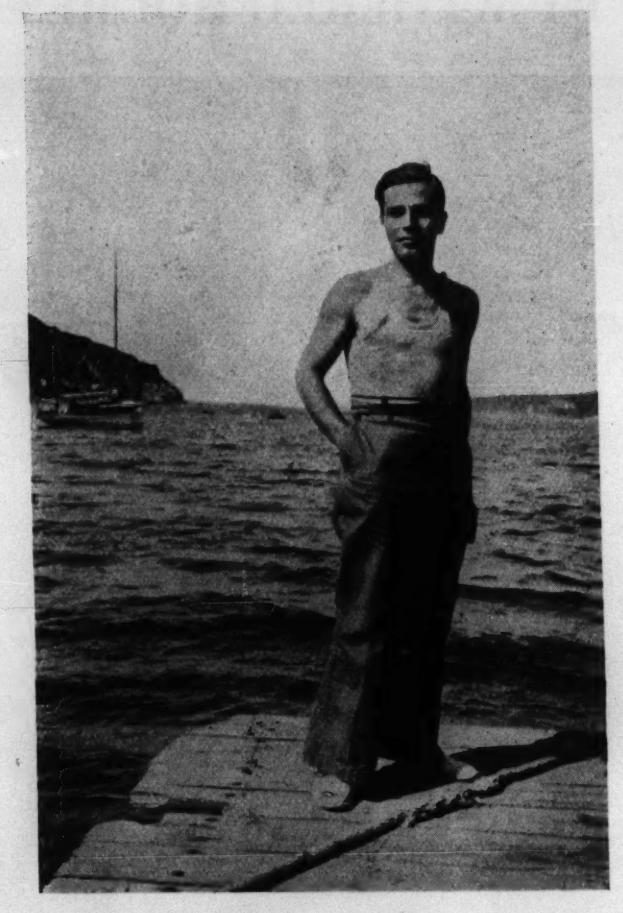
In collaboration with Kurt Weill and Brecht, Rathaus made a successful attempt to solve the problem of respiration in German singing by a system of pronunciation akin to everyday speech. The method has been applied to broadcast performances of Wagner in Germany.

MUSIC AND FILM

BY MAURICE JAUBERT

Maurice Jaubert is a native of the South of France, and a well-known composer in his own country—especially in Paris. His serious compositions have not yet been heard in London.

His first film work was the music for Wavrin's documentary *Pays du Scalp*—1929–30. Since then he has worked with Cavalcanti, Vigo and Clair. His last job was in Litvak's *La Vie Parisienne*. He is in his early thirties.



Maurice Jaubert

The musical film paradoxically enough needs only a passing reference, as it does not raise any important problems. In this case the music is in control, whether it exists before the film is shot (e.g. *The Unfinished Symphony*) or when it is specially composed (e.g. *Forty-second Street*).

In the silent days, the inevitable musical accompaniment showed how the visuals could be strengthened when their own internal rhythm was underlined and accentuated by the music. When sound came in, producers were too timid to do anything but carry on this tradition.

At best they demand very little of music. They use it to fill up blanks in the sound track, either when the original sound is too weak, or when the director has failed to get effective noises for a particular sequence. But more generally, music is chiefly used to *comment* on the action. For a tragic scene, emphasis on the horns or trombones accentuates the gloom. For sentiment, a solo violin, and so on.

In *The Lost Patrol*—otherwise an admirable film—the director was apparently alarmed by the silence of the desert in which the story was laid. He might well have realised the dramatic possibilities of silence, but instead he assaulted the ear—without a moment's pause—with a gratuitous orchestral accompaniment which nearly destroyed the reality of the visuals.

Another attitude was well illustrated in *The Informer* where music was used to imitate the noise of coins falling and even the gurgling of beer in a man's throat.

This is not merely puerile, but a misconception of what music is, for it takes away its continuity and reduces it to the level of raw sound. But sometimes, just as the novelist interrupts his straight story with personal digressions, or descriptions of his character's feelings, so also the director escapes from the usual rut and adds poetic or documentary elements which give his film an added character. In such cases music has a chance. The very fact of its appearance acts as a warning to the audience that the mood of the film is being temporarily changed. This change of balance should be carefully worked out by the director. In some cases music can be used for shock purposes, for instance, a sudden orchestral fortissimo at a moment of crisis. In other cases it may creep in insidiously, evolving from some rhythmic noise like that of a train.

Unfortunately, most writers of music for films have already become enslaved by the usual requirements of producers, and have evolved a kind of film-music language, which combines the least suitable Wagnerian clichés with the smooth facility of imitation Debussy.

They should be reminded that we do not go to the films to hear music. We want music to give greater depth to our impressions of the visuals. We do not want it to explain the visuals, but to add to them *by differing from them*. In other words, it should not be *expressive*, in the sense of adding its quota to the sentiments expressed by the actors or the director, but *decorative* in the sense of adding its own design to that proper to the screen.

Finally, film-music must in nature be recorded, so that, however perfect the means of recording, the composer should never forget the special qualities of the microphone or the possibilities of re-recording and the cutting bench.

To give a personal example, in Vigo's *Zero de Conduite* I had to write music to a procession of small boys by night, the occasion being a dormitory rebellion. The sequence in itself was highly fantastic and shot in slow motion. In order to follow out this atmosphere of unreality, I recorded my music and then reversed the sound track. The effect of running it backwards was to retain the broad outline of the melody, but as each single note was heard backwards an atmosphere of strangeness was achieved.

Music, like direction, set-design and cutting, must do its bit to bring clarity, logic and especially truth to the development of any film. If it can quietly add an extra element of poetry, so much the better.

The Story of a Blues Pianist

John Goldman contributes this special article to mark the issue in England of the record of the classic, "Honky-Tonk Train Blues," by the American negro pianist, Meade Lux Lewis.

Some five years ago, in a small town of a southern State, John Hammond stopped in at a second-hand goods store on one of his rounds, searching for talent. Following his custom, he searched through the pile of old records stacked in a corner. He pulled out several and played them over. One was so old and so scratched that unless you listened carefully you could not hear much of what was being played. The record was "Honky-Tonk Train Blues," played by Meade Lux Lewis, a pianist he had never heard of before.

He took the record home, and the more he listened the more enthusiastic he became over what was, undoubtedly, one of the most original pieces of jazz ever recorded. He enquired about the pianist, but no one had ever heard of him.

That was five years ago. Since then he asked every musician he ever met for information. But he never received the slightest indication that the man had ever existed. He concluded that Lewis was dead, or was one of the thousands of illiterate and unknown negroes who play and are eternally lost in the gin-mills of American cities.

Last October Hammond was in Chicago looking for talent, this time for the new British Parlophone series. Hearing of a promising bassist playing at a haunt of the name of De Lisa, he went there to listen to him. He turned out to be as good as Hammond had hoped, an eighteen-year-old negro named Israel Crosby. He is the bass player, by the way, in "Barrelhouse."

To get in touch with the orchestra, Hammond started talking to the pianist. He opened the conversation as he had five thousand others "Do you play 'Honky-Tonk Train Blues'? Do you know Meade Lux Lewis?" "Why man, Lux is my best friend!" exclaimed the pianist.

They searched for three days and eventually found him in a garage, washing a car. Hammond immediately swept him off to his hotel, questioning him all the time. He had composed "Honky-Tonk" twelve years before, but it had not caught on because it was too difficult for anyone else to play. He had not played it for a long time, but he could remember it.

At the hotel he sat down and played "Honky-Tonk" through. During the intervening years he had added two extra choruses, and he played even more faultlessly than on the original record. The poor man was amazed; he could not understand Hammond's excitement. No one had ever told him he was any good; besides, he explained, the type of music he played had long since gone out of fashion; people no longer cared for the Blues. For several hours that night he played one Blues after another.

A few days later he awoke to fame. One of the big New York evening newspapers splashed his fantastic story in headlines across the front page. To-day he is installed as a feature player in one of the well-known New York night resorts. He is engaged in making more records, and they will be Blues. Two have just reached this country: "Mr. Freddy Blues" and "I'm in the Mood for Love."

CHINESE FILMS FOR CHINA

中國電影在國內國外之情形

BY WINIFRED HOLMES

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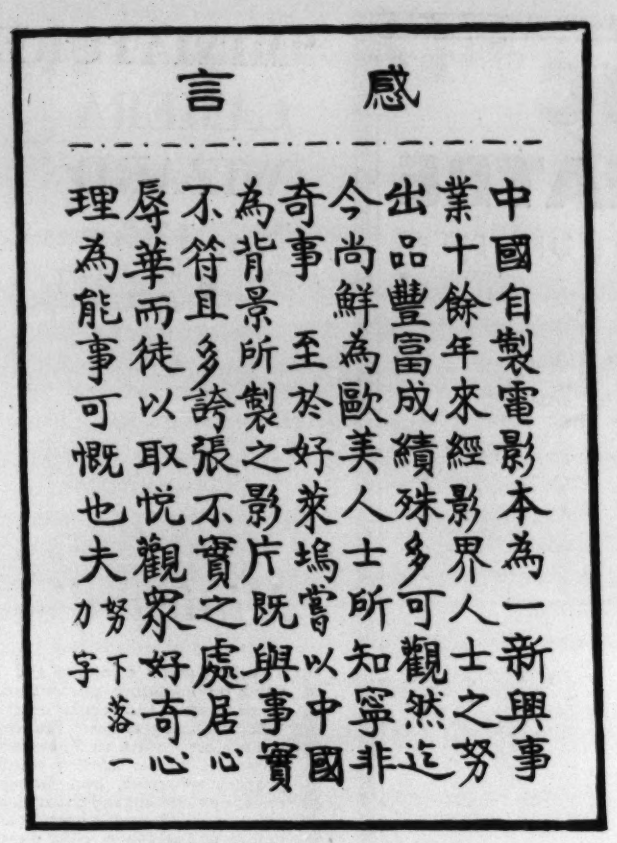

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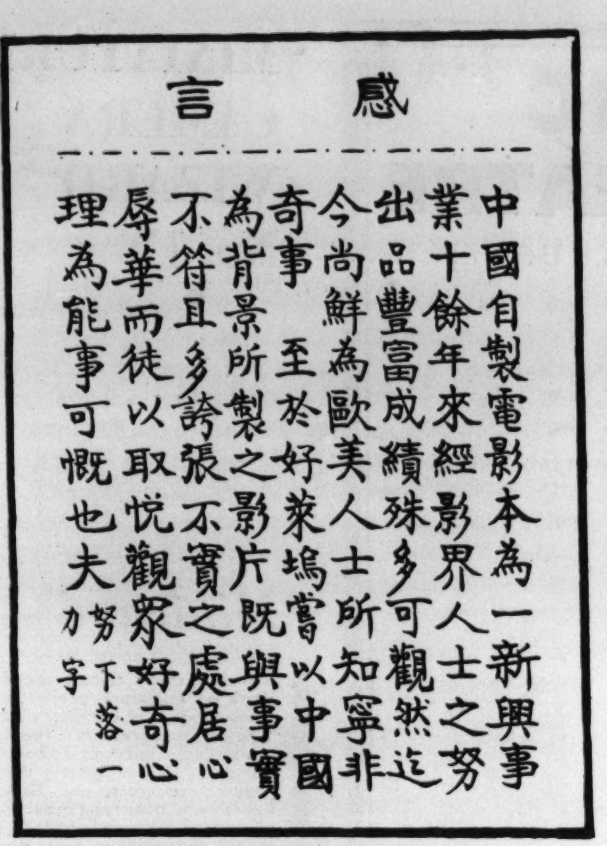

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Percy W. Harris, Editor of the "Home Photographer," in his introduction to the book, writes:
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PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW ADDRESS

Amateur Film in a Rut
says Paul Burnford

Paul Burnford, prize amateur film-maker, now a professional worker, gives advice to amateurs and makes some trenchant criticism.

The Amateur Film Maker has fallen into a rut. With the exception of a few rare cases there has hardly been a single example of original or creative work since the advent of sub-standard apparatus 12 years ago. While admitting that the standard of photography has steadily improved, it has only developed in exact ratio to the better stock and processing and is therefore of little credit to the film-maker himself.

Amateurs can be divided into four distinct classes: (*a*) the quasi-intellectuals with their inexhaustible supply of high-hatted words and phrases, who are always just going to accomplish something; (*b*) the makers of film plays, desirous of thrusting their physiognomies before a waiting world; (*c*) the fond parent with his records of little Oswald and the family, and (*d*) the realist. The latter term is used in a general sense, meaning the worker with a more serious approach to film making, using the movie for a purpose.

The amateur's supreme fault is his misunderstanding of the basic principles of construction. It matters little what type of subject is undertaken, but it must be simple and have scope for acquiring a knowledge of film construction. To fulfil the latter requirement it must have some thematic link throughout.

It is best for the realist to start on some very simple subject. Take any straightforward job of work, such as a man digging, and build a short film around it. Show how the human effort, assisted by the spade, enables the work to be accomplished. It all seems very simple, but requires considerable ingenuity. Digging is a scientific job—try and analyse it. Show the man's face with the sweat dripping from his brow, his concentration, the entry of the spade into the earth, and its turning action, the muscular effect of his arms, and stress the fact that after he has been labouring for a given time work has been accomplished. Try and preserve throughout a perfect sense of time and rhythm.

The aim should be to show the process in the minimum amount of footage. This entails not necessarily the elimination of the long shot, mid shot practice, but demands the keeping of these down to a minimum length. The tendency at first is usually to drag out the subject to an unnecessary length, a fault which with practice will be automatically reduced.

Cease envying the professional with his more elaborate equipment and holding this as an excuse for inferior film making. Give the amateur professional equipment with its intricacies and complications, and the results would be considerably worse than they are at present.

Do not be afraid to experiment and risk new ideas. Even if they do not at first materialise, they will help to give life to a branch of film making which has too long been dormant. Try various camera angles and set ups, and experiment in the cutting, but remember that in anything attempted there must be some subject and idea behind it.

Always preconceive what material will be required, and how it will take its place in the finished whole. If you should decide to shoot an object from a certain angle to add emphasis, stick to your original idea and do not deviate. Uncertainty always leads to broken continuity in the completed film.

As a final plea, get inside your subject, and do not hesitate to show up details. The personification of effort by showing the sweat on a person's brow throws the sequence into relief, and has a far more telling and dramatic significance than all the haphazard shooting in the world.

WE HOPE THAT

We shall soon see the Toeplitz-Chevalier *Beloved Vagabond.*

Romeo and Juliet will do better than *Midsummer Night's Dream.*

The craze for film musical-comedies will reach saturation point at an early date.

The Trade will soon set about the formation of a central statistical bureau.

Everyone will be quite satisfied with their Television sets.

The August issue of "World Film News" will include an article on the Home Libraries and their fund of first-rate films.

Book Reviews

FILM MUSIC by Kurt London (Faber & Faber. 12*s.* 6*d.*)

It was about time for someone to write a book on this subject, and if Dr. London does not go very deep into the subject, he does at least give a very complete résumé of the relations between Music and Films during the past forty years.

There is a particularly good chapter on the system of film music compiled by Becce for cinema orchestras in the old silent days. This was the *Kinothak*, which divided music under such heads as "Uncanny agitato," "Impending doom," "Disturbed Masses; Tumult," "Passionate excitement" and so on.

Dr. Kurt London is 37 years old. He was well known in Germany for his film work before the Hitler regime. He edited "Der Film," and subsequently established a microphone institute for sound film, radio and gramophone recording. He is also a composer.

In regard to the modern sound film, Dr. London very rightly takes composers to task for sticking to the large symphony orchestra instead of developing a technique suitable not only for the microphone but also for the demands of film expression.

The chapters on modern composers of film music are illustrated with excerpts from typical scores. It is very interesting to compare the rigid economy of Walter Leigh's *Song of Ceylon* music with the elaboration of Bliss's score for *Things to Come.*

If you are interested in the sound film, you had better get this book. **S. A. B.**

HOME PORTRAITURE—WITH THE MINIATURE CAMERA by Minicam (Newnes. 3*s.* 6*d.*)

A comprehensive guide to all aspects of photography. Designed for amateurs it covers everything the beginner wants to know in clear everyday English. There is a welcome absence of scientific jargon with which the older school embarrass their work. It is a pity that in so excellent a book the photographs could not have been better reproduced.

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STRAND MARCHES ON

1935

For All Eternity
(Marion Grierson)

Taking the Plunge
(Donald Taylor)

The Key to Scotland
(Marion Grierson)

Citizens of the Future
(Donald Taylor)
In association with G. B. Instructional.

Heart of an Empire
(Marion Grierson)

Private Life of Mr. Therm
(Donald Taylor)

Beside the Seaside
(Marion Grierson)

Sixpenny Telegrams
(Donald Taylor)

"We bring alive the past and the present for the future"

1936

On the Road to Work (Edgar Anstey) A Film about the Ministry of Labour Training and Instructional Centres.

Work Waits for You (Alex Shaw) A Film about Juvenile Transference Schemes.

NOW IN PRODUCTION

Preface to Life (Alex Shaw) A Film of Books, Writers and Publishers.

The Royal Road (J. B. Holmes) A Film about Transport and Railway Electrification.

The Roof of the World (R. Keene and P. Burnford) A Film of what happens on the Roof Tops of London.

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Church and Film

THE MOST IMPORTANT event of the month is the remarkable decision of the Scottish churches reported by the Rev. George Carstairs, Editor of *Life and Work*. The traditions of religion in Scotland seemed altogether against acceptance of the film as an instrument in church work. As it has turned out these traditions have given a character and precision to the church's film approach which Sassenach churches should envy. No film in church services—a hard drive for films which will promote the social services: that is the policy outlined.

Public relations officers of Government departments and the big national organisations will welcome this decision. Sooner or later it means two or three thousand church halls in Scotland open to films which promote one or other of the public interests. The movement grows. In a few years' time there will be many thousands of halls open in this way. There will be the halls of the churches, of the educational groups, of the business clubs, the social organisations. This represents a vast opportunity for educational film services which have something to say and *something to give* to the community.

* * *

Gas Sponsors Diet Film

MOST INTERESTING of the production announcements is from the Gas people. They have begun production on a film dealing with the national diet, based on the investigations recently reported by Sir John Orr in *Diet and the National Income*. This is great going.

Orr's *Diet and the National Income* and M'Gonigle's *Poverty and Public Health* cover one of the most important themes in the national life to-day. Widespread ill-health and *un*-health derive from malnutrition—from the choice of wrong food and from incomes too low to purchase the necessary protective vitamins and minerals which are contained in milk, dairy produce, vegetables, fruit, etc.

When Orr's report appeared, the newspapers made a front page sensation of it. *Daily Worker* headlines announced that half the population of Britain was starving; the *Morning Post* announced that half the population, on the other hand, was overeating. Between these two extremes, science and the medical profession are agreed, after long years of research, that a new and revolutionary light has been shed on the maintenance of health and the prevention of disease.

It is very brilliant of the Gas people to collar this subject. Who more interested in food, cookery and the preservation of food than they? They will, incidentally, be doing a great service in publicising the question and the public must quickly recognise it.

S. C. Leslie, Publicity Officer of the Gas, Light and Coke Co., is responsible. He recently succeeded A. P. Ryan, who associated gas and the public service for the first time in film, with last year's *Housing Problems* and *Dinner Hour*. Diet is a more dramatic step in a great public relations policy.

* * *

Strand Makes Book Subject

THE BOOK COUNCIL has retained the Taylor-Rotha outfit (Strand Films) for a film which will encourage reading. This book film will be called *Preface to Life*, and the film will be of great interest to literary societies. The theme is that books are 'the way of experience.' Somerset Maugham, John Masefield, Louis Golding, Julian Huxley, Rebecca West and Virginia Woolf, among others, contribute to the film. They will describe the many traditions of English literature and indicate what part books are playing and may yet play in the modern life.

Strand Films are strong in directors. D. F. Taylor, managing director, was responsible for *So this is Lancashire*, *Spring Comes to England*, and *Citizens of the Future*. Rotha, chief of production, has directed with Bruce Woolfe some of the most outstanding documentary successes, including *Shipyard* and *The Face of Britain*. His recent transport film, *Death on the Road*, is now breaking circulation records for documentary films and has gone to over a thousand theatres. Shaw, who is directing the book film, made some fine travel films last year for the Orient Line and has recently completed a film on labour camps for the Ministry of Labour. A new director for Strand is J. B. Holmes, one of the best of the Bruce Woolfe graduates.

Scottish Church Founds Film Guild

ON THE 21st of May there was instituted in Edinburgh a Scottish Churches Film Guild. It is an inter-denominational body, and its object is described in the constitution in terms so general as to indicate that its first task will be the shaping of a policy. "The purpose of the Guild," we read, "shall be to encourage the use of the film in the service of the Church, to advise as to the use of the film for religious purposes, and to assist congregations and religious bodies by means of the production and supply of suitable films."

The wording shows considerable caution, and caution is likely to characterise the Guild's first tentative efforts. Any rash attempt to "put the Gospel on the screen" would most probably result in the vulgarising of things sacred. The possibilities of the film in relation to religion have yet to be explored. But at least there is ample scope—through films on urgent social questions of the hour, films illustrative of the Church's own work, and, it may be, films showing the results of Christian principles in human life—of presenting in a new and telling way many of the things which the Church has at heart.

Of course, everything will depend on what may be regarded as "suitable films." There is no sphere in which there is greater danger of dropping into sentimentality than that of religion, and a sentimental religious film would be a horror and a desecration. The Guild aims at securing films, not only of high technical merit, but worthy in subject and of educative value.

Meantime there is much to be done in creating a demand throughout the country. There are thousands of church halls which could be used for purposes of exhibition. If the use of the film should become a normal part of Church activity there will be no lack of circulation, and consequently the problem of production should not prove insuperable.

Incidentally, one hopes that, if through the efforts of the Guild the film becomes an asset to the Church, at the same time the Church may be lending its aid to those in the film industry who are striving, especially through the production of good documentary films, to raise the cinema from a mere form of entertainment to what it ought to be—one of the most powerful educative forces of our day.

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P.F.

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JIMMY ROGERS

JIMMY ROGERS has grown up with the film industry, and his family was connected with the theatrical profession for generations. The Middletons, William Middleton, originator of the famous Middleton Marionettes, and Miss Millie Middleton, the toe dancer, and the Terry family are all branches of the family tree. His grandfather was responsible for the old-time transformation scenes at Drury Lane and Sadler's Wells. His father painted the pictures for Poole's Myrioramas, which were established in 1837—a kind of pictorial review of important world events.

One day Mr. Poole's son, who succeeded his father, brought to the studio a new invention—a cinematograph camera that could hold about fifty feet of film, and from that day motion pictures were included in Poole's programmes.

While still in his teens Jimmy became Studio Manager and Art Director for Windsor Films, later working with Kineto, Barker's and Kinemacolor. It was with the latter company that he achieved his ambition and learnt to use a ciné camera.

After the war he shot his first picture, *The Bridal Chair*, for G. B. Samuelson. He travelled to Egypt, Palestine and Syria on French productions. On returning to France he met Alberto Cavalcanti and together they made the first European documentary film, the famous *Rien que les Heures*. Of his meeting with Cavalcanti, Rogers says—"Here at last was someone who realised that a cameraman was an artist whose creative work was important to the success of the film and not, as was the general belief in those days, just a mere man to turn a handle."

His association with Cavalcanti continued for some time—on *Yvette*, *Le Train sans Yeux*, *La P'tite Lilie*, and *En Rade*. The latter was completely made in black-and-white. Previously it had always been considered necessary to use tinted stock. "I can recall many cases," says Rogers, "when a director would not wait for the sun to shine to light his set but instead, shoot it, tint it, and call it night !"

After three years in France, Rogers got homesick and came back to England, shooting several films for B.I.P., B. and D., and others. Then abroad again. He has worked in pretty nearly every country—West and North Africa, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Greece, Portugal, Italy, Austria, Switzerland and Ceylon.

He likes travelling and meeting the inhabitants of other countries as they really are, and not as the tourist sees them. "I have always found everybody everywhere eager to help," he says," and have made many good friends during my travels."

And if you are ever near Elstree, where he lives, drop in some time and see the collection of curios he has gathered from all over the world.

Revivalists enter Propaganda Field

The Oxford Group — go-getting, revivalist religious group—have made a film, *Bridgebuilders*. It describes a recent house party in Denmark which thousands of people from all over the world attended. The film mostly consists of shots of different kinds of people going about in groups and looking happy, but contains good stuff taken indoors of Frank Buchman, leader and inspirer of the movement, addressing the assembly.

Eric Parfit, who was producer, claims to have had no previous experience, though there are signs of technical knowledge not usually commanded by amateurs. One suspects a certain amount of professionalism somewhere.

For finance, the producers just went ahead and money turned up. This is, of course, in line with Oxford Group practice, and they evidently have a pull over the ordinary realist director who has to rely on the tougher generosity of publicity departments.

Confidence that when the spirit moves one to start filming the money will come along, and deliberate lack of set plans may be good finance; but such methods make bad scripts. Next time the groupists start filming we recommend them to stick to their principles of raising the wind (they seem good) but to modify them when it comes to shooting. Clearer ideas, detailed scripts, organised production next time, please.

All the same the film is a great deal better than many similar efforts. It gets along, but the theme is a bit confused. The title refers to a bridge being built in Denmark. The Oxford Group, the film tries to say, is like a bridge between people and people (or between people and God). But all it succeeds in putting across is that a lot of people went to Denmark which is a country where they are building a bridge.

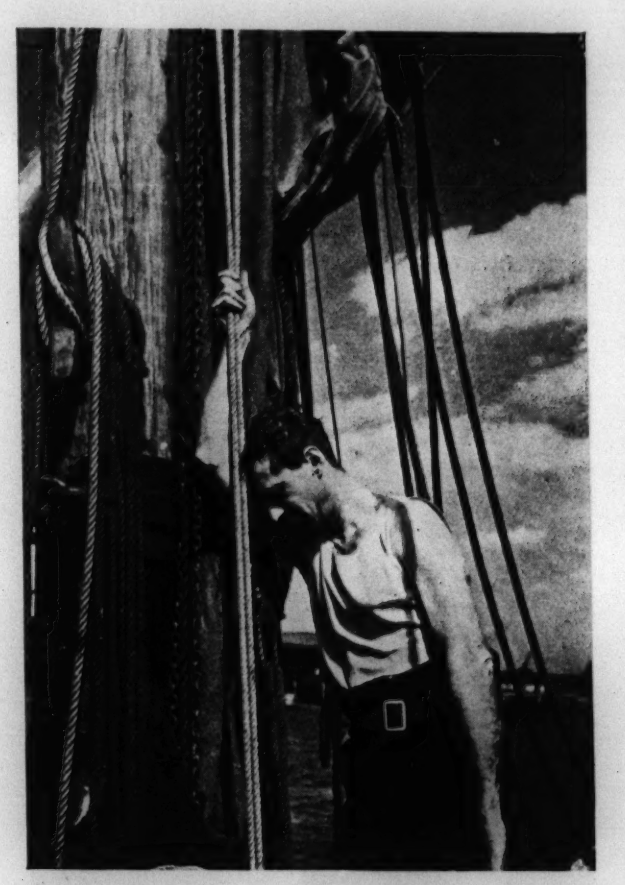
The producer dwells lovingly on shots of the bridge half covered by boards carrying the name of the builder. The finger of Dorman Long reaches far.

Bridgebuilders is for distribution to the theatres and fifteen thousand groupists, it is claimed, have already written to their local cinema managers asking them to book it. A. E.

Novelist directs real-life film

Arnot Robertson, author of *Ordinary Families* and *Four Frightened People*—the latter was filmed by de Mille—follows up her earlier experiments with a short billed as *Slices of Life No.* 1. The title is *Low Water*.

Idea is good. A down-and-out on the docks, weak with hunger, gets an unexpected job as a barge hand. The story tells simply of his efforts to run the barge for one day without cracking up under the eyes of a grim and taciturn captain.



He succeeds in getting through, and is given a permanent job.

It is difficult to put across what is virtually a one-man show on the part of the deck-hand, and the results tend occasionally to amateurishness.

The sound is well-planned as a soliloquy representing the man's thoughts. Unfortunately the recording was out of hand of the director; there are no changes of level or of intonation, and the whole film is backed by singularly unimpressive music. In future the director should control her own sound score.

The photography by H. E. Turner, husband of the director, is very good. B. W.

* * *

The story of the Shetland Islanders will be told by Michael Powell in a film called *Edge of the World*. The Joe Rock unit has just left for Foula, where a camp has been specially constructed for them. An expedition steamer has also been fitted out for them at Sunderland. Only local characters and talent will be used, and expert cliff men will take part in the film.

The crux of the story is a gathering up of circumstances and conditions which may force the Islanders to leave their homes and start a new life on the mainland. This is an authentic situation which has arisen more than once in the Islands' story.

Emperor of Leicester Square

Charles Raymond, former circus man, now manager of the Empire Theatre, reveals the organisation of a big West End cinema. His chief-of-staff, head projectionist and chief engineer explain their jobs to "World Film News."

"HERE'S A LITTLE LADY who pets, fondles and caresses poisonous and venomous reptiles as if she was a mother with a baby in her arms." Charles Raymond speaking back in 1917 as freak-show manager and ballyhoo man for an American circus. Raymond is now manager of the Empire, Leicester Square, and sits at a flower-decked desk, the red and orange neons for the current picture gleaming through his window.

Page boy, actor, publicity man, radio announcer, lecturer before the silent screen and assistant to the pioneer mystic Anna Eva Fay. He worked audiences in her mind-reading act. On special campaigns he was studio contact for the Will Hay's office; he pioneered South Africa

Charles Raymond

for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, and has been their faithful servant for ten years.

Charles Raymond has brought American efficiency to the running of the West End's largest cinema. His staff numbers over one hundred and he makes no allowances for hitches in the organisation. There are no hitches. Through his chief-of-staff, Fred G. Fuller, he controls a uniformed gang of forty-five. These are the men who address you politely, who show you to your seat or remove you gently from the luxuriance of the *loge* which you have not booked to the front stall which is rightfully yours. These men are commanded to walk, never to run, to keep every hair in place and to wield a torch with the craftsmanship born of experience.

Mr. Fuller is a retired sergeant-major and though he requires utmost respect of his army to the "customers" he will not allow them to be treated as slaves. These men have self-respect. They have a valet to take care of their uniforms, they have clean linen twice a week and newly-cleaned uniforms once a month. They parade twice a day for cleanliness inspection and on Sunday there is the big parade and the roll call.

No militarism about this, just discipline and efficiency. But there is one thing Mr. Fred G. Fuller cannot control, and that is the growth of the 14-year-old youngsters he takes on as page-boys. It has become almost a menace to the smooth-running of the Empire. Only unremitting zeal can bridge the tell-tale gap between trouser and jacket.

The Empire management has pronounced women unsatisfactory as ushers. As a concession they are allowed in the tea-room, the box-office and the secretarial staff, but from the all-important job of usher they have been banned. The Empire is a man's show.

Twenty-five cleaners, six projectionists, eight electricians, four firemen, five cashiers, three ventilating engineers, four cloakroom maids—Raymond can reel them off for he knows the jobs of each member of his staff.

The Empire runs the longest hours in London, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. It pioneered cheap admission prices for morning shows and has Daimlers and Rolls Royces rolling up to catch the bargain performance. It possesses a full-size stage, back of the screen, but has never used it. Built by an American architect as a cinema in 1928, its policy has remained cinematic. Its longest run of all has been *Broadway Melody*, the original one, for 7½ weeks; its second longest, *Mutiny on the Bounty*. Other than these, it has run three and three only for as long as four weeks. These were *Queen Christina*, *Trader Horn* and *Tale of Two Cities*. Two of the five were in 1936. Shows start on Friday and by Monday Sam Eckman (head of M.G.M. British) and Charles Raymond know whether the film will stay for a longer run. Takings of £10,000 a week are common, £13,000 not unknown.

Stanley Perry is the chief projectionist and he has a staff of six men, each of whom is not only a projectionist but a sound engineer. Sound is relayed into the projection box and is to a certain extent controlled by the men at the machines. But the finer touches are given by volume control from the theatre itself. Perry is a believer in the human touch and it is his job to study the sound projection at trade shows and rehearsals so that he knows each film intimately. He cues the finer points at the actual performance of each show. As a musician submits the reading of a score, so Perry has a sound reading for each film. Mechanical accuracy is not wanted. It is the art of the showman to supply the human touch.

Stanley Perry is president of the Guild of Projectionists, and is something of a veteran in the projection business, as he started with films in 1912. He saw the beginning of sound pictures at the Empire and has been on its staff since the theatre was opened in 1928.

The Empire has a peculiarity which Mr. Perry believes is shared by very few theatres on this or the other side of the Atlantic. It changes its screen once every month—for the very good reason that tobacco smoke makes it dirty.

J. S. Morgan is engineer-in-chief at the Empire. He looks after everything mechanical except the projectors. Seats, gangways, upholstery (there are 3,600 chairs), fire precautions, lights, automatic weather control, all belong to his world.

Morgan is Welsh. He has been in the business since the war. He trained at Thornicroft's, the oil engine people, and then went to Duncan Watson, king of cinema and theatre lighting. In silent days he had to organise the lighting of a revivalist scene in Trafalgar Square (not on a set but the real place). Metro-Goldwyn were so pleased that they offered him a job on the spot, and he went to California as studio engineer.

He has led an exciting life. He was in charge of the *Ben Hur* outfit in Rome, and had to do everything from organising the transport to supplying aeroplanes to make a wind. He saw the Fascists deal summarily with a worker who slept in the engine room, dosing him with castor oil every day for a week. He went on location with Rex Ingram in Egypt. He had to transport a 200 h.p. Diesel into the desert. He dug a hole in the sand for the engine bed. No sooner dug than it filled up. Ingram passed from rage to dumb depression. Then Morgan's Arab assistant had an idea. He went to the nearest town miles away, and brought back a limewashing outfit and some plaster of paris. They dug the hole for the *n*th time. The Arab sprayed plaster of paris on the sides and over the surface of the desert for yards around.

Fred G. Fuller

Stanley Perry

That held the sand till the bedplate of the engine could be lowered into place.

Now Morgan feels it is time to settle down with his wife and two children. So he has taken the Empire under his wing. His speciality is the automatic weather. He will tell you that ten people give out a pound of moisture in an hour, and fifty people give out as much heat continuously as a steam radiator.

When the Empire ran community singing, there was almost a panic in the control room. The temperature of the theatre went up by leaps and bounds and the moisture content of the air increased surprisingly. The engineers thought something had failed, till they discovered what was happening and made adjustments.

Manufacturing weather is an art as well as a science. It demands judgment as well as enormous

MECHANICS

Emperor of Leicester Square (contd.)

mechanical plant. The idea is to keep the air absolutely even in the amount of moisture it contains. This avoids strain on the lungs and makes for comfort. Morgan's job is to sell films. If comfort conditions are good, people will tolerate even an indifferent film; if they are bad, the best film will suffer. That is why it is worth Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's while to spend thousands of pounds on manufactured weather.

The volume of the Empire is a million cubic feet. That is difficult to imagine unless you remember that an average-sized sitting room contains about nine hundred and sixty cubic feet and would fit into the Empire nearly a thousand times.

The air in the Empire is changed completely six times an hour.

The important thing about air is not its temperature but the amount of moisture it contains. Too dry, and it affects your throat; too damp and it makes you heavy and oppressed. All the air for

J. S. Morgan

the Empire is brought in through streams of cold water. This takes out the dirt and since the air is cooled, most of the moisture as well. In the process the air becomes too dry and must be re-humidified to give it just the right amount of moisture and no more. Two hundred and fifty tons of ice are used every day for the cooling.

At home one opens the window at the top to let out the bad air, and the good air comes in at the bottom. Not so with modern manufactured weather. The fresh air is let in from the roof and it drives the stale air out through the doors. This keeps down dust and prevents draughts as draughts are caused by cool air blowing *into* a room. Air blows *out* at the Empire.

Morgan is in charge of seating and upholstery. People fidget continually when they are watching a picture and ashtrays are smashed by the hundred. The upholstery is changed completely every eighteen months and renewal goes on row by row all the year round.

I Spy a Pedestrian

THE NATIONAL PHYSICAL Laboratory is planning to use film to solve a topical street lighting problem. In many parts of the country the electric discharge lamp is replacing the filament lamp as a street lighting source. The new type of lamp differs from the old in the colour of the light it gives. The sodium lamp and the mercury vapour lamp—the two discharge lamps in common use—give respectively a yellow tinged light and a green tinged light. Colour may possibly affect the speed and clearness with which the motorist sees objects in his path.

The street lighting experts are transferring the problem from the street to the laboratory. They have prepared a film of a normally illuminated street from a series of stills in which appear pedestrians, cyclists, dogs and other common hazards. When the film is projected these objects will suddenly appear in selected positions on the road. The effect of a change in street lighting is achieved in a highly ingenious manner. It is done not by photographing another street but by changing the projector light source. First a tungsten lamp is used in the projector, then a mercury discharge lamp is used, then a sodium discharge lamp. In each case a series of observers will record by pressing a key the instant in the film when the pedestrians and dogs become visible to them.

The intensity of illumination will be the same for each type of lamp and any difference in the observers' reaction time between one kind of light and another will be due to the colour change alone.

The effect of glare from the street lamps on the screen cannot be accurately reproduced by film. It is proposed to test for glare by cutting holes in the screen at the points where the images of lamps appear and placing lights of the appropriate kind behind the screen so that they shine through the holes into the eyes of the observer.

The man behind 'Secrets of Nature'

Few people know that behind the G.B.I. *Secrets of Life* series, one man, working steadily and unobtrusively, has made these films possible.

It was during his schooldays at Lady Owen's, Islington, that Percy Smith decided upon his future career. A visit and lecture from a member of the Quekett Microscopical Club planted a lasting interest in his mind.

When he left school, he took a government job with the Board of Education: a very important one, he told *W.F.N.* impressively. It consisted of crossing out the "Sir or Madam" on printed forms. He spent all his spare time with a microscope, and in 1900, with an ache for a camera but with an empty pocket, he built one out of a flower-pot.

In 1902 he augmented his guinea a week salary by making lantern-slides of insects and plant-life. During this time he was giving lectures to scientific groups, and later, for a period, edited the *Quekett Microscopical Club Journal*.

About 1906, Percy Smith saw his first film, and at once spotted the possibilities of bringing nature to the screen. He approached the Board of Education, but could get no financial support.

Two years later his chance came when a gold-edged card arrived inviting him to a private film show. Charles Urban, of the Urban-Duncan Bioscope Science Series, had seen some of his lantern-slides and offered him a part-time job. With an old camera and an *f*/6 lens, he achieved results that got him the use of as many lenses as the company owned. He made a stunt film with blue-bottles as the stars. They are so constructed that they could be made to appear as if they were lifting weights and nursing babies. This film brought tremendous publicity and encouraged Percy Smith to give up his government job.

During the War he made films for the Air Force, but in 1920 he rejoined Urban's company. then known as Kineto, until it broke up. For three years he was unemployed. Then he tried his hand at cartoons. At this time he met Bruce Woolfe, and presently joined him at Surbiton. Gnats were the subject of his first film here. After several successes came the move to Welwyn. B.I.P. took over, and he made a series dealing with the mechanism of cars.

Under contract with G.B.I., he has arranged that his work is done at home. He has a house that is a cross between a science museum and a Heath Robinson paradise. Every room is a laboratory, every garden-shed an incubator, and every greenhouse a studio. It is dangerous to touch anything, for the most innocent-looking knob or screw sets a whole series of mechanisms in motion. All the apparatus has been made by Smith with the cheapest of tools and materials.

Percy Smith wanders about country rivers and pools to find interesting subjects for films. It is he who nurses and tends them through their different stages of growth so that they may be known to a wider public. It is he who constructs the variety of gadgets that make the photographing of them possible, and it is he who quite regularly works through the night in order to note and photograph the most exciting developments of his insects and plants.

Percy Smith has always been a happy man, but now he is much happier. G.B.I. are to enter the educational field more seriously, and Percy Smith will be able to forget that films are supposed to make money. He believes they have a much greater purpose.

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Pioneer recalls struggles of early newsreel

BY FRED WATTS (PATHÉ PICTURES)

Back in the dim years when the first news film was created, news was a matter of three or four scrambled items, briefly titled, with few scenes and little of the close-up about them. But in those days, what did it matter—the great marvel was to see any kind of life on the screen, flickery and fitful though it was—and as for speed, well, certain items did get out quickly enough, but a question of a day or two was, generally speaking, neither here nor there.

Out of those beginnings in 1910 the first British Gazette started a new order. To those pioneers of a quarter of a century ago, full credit should be given, for theirs was no easy task—slow lenses, slow negative, a world which had not become cinema conscious, in fact a world which was in many cases distrustful of the cinema and in some cases even hostile.

In those days, too, officialdom was frequently very hard to convince of the necessity for any film being taken at all. They did not realise that the outside world might want to know what was happening.

Cinemas, too, were not of the super type now in existence, and projectors lacked to-day's technical excellence and reliability. Volumes could be written of the adventures of some of the early pioneers—names like Henry Sanders, Danvers Yates (now both, alas, no more), Tommy Scales, Leslie Wyand, Jock Gemmell, Frank Bassill, Jack Cotter, Jimmy MacDowell, Ken Gordon, Monty Redknap, Tommy Cummins, Bert Bishop, B. Bromwich, Walter Buxton, Jack Hutchins, Jack Raymond, Rodney Sexton, and Jimmy Ferguson (both killed in the War), Harold Japes, M. Jentil and Rene Monca (the latter also killed in the War), George Ercole (the international globe trotter), and Emile Lauste.

All these pioneers played their part in blazing a trial across the growing screens of the world.

Some of the early newsreels were short-lived—in the hard and bitter competition of modern times only the fittest could survive, but others rose to take their place. To-day we have five newsreels—all keenly competitive, and each trying to outdo its rivals, either in speed, subject or make-up.

Out of the small 300 ft. reel of 1910, the super British newsreel of 1926 grew—750 ft. of it. When sound came, up went the length again, and to-day the average is up to 850 ft. and we have not yet seen the limit.

The three or four item Gazette became six or seven items, and to-day, eight, ten, twelve or even more items from the four corners of the world are regularly presented to an eager public.

The continued development of the News Theatre, too, may well exercise a growing influence on the length question, for the News Theatres are insatiable in their quest for news—news—and more news.

What might be uneconomical to produce for two or three News Theatres may yet be commercially possible when the numbers grow to scores and perhaps hundreds.

And what now? Well, television is dawning—as friend of the film or foe, no one knows—yet! It may be for years to come that television will be largely dependent upon film processes for the television picture. This will bring in its wake other problems—those of adequate facilities in the face of possible opposition from the newsreels. After all, many thousands of pounds are spent annually by the various newsreel companies in buying film rights and facilities for film making at events for which there is a big demand. At one time the competition between newsreel companies in obtaining exclusive rights was extremely fierce, but to-day they work in closer harmony.

Television will need to solve many problems in its early struggles, and perhaps the initial obstacles of choice of subject and facilities to take them may prove difficult to overcome.

From the far-off time of the early days to the high speed rush of to-day—a long and arduous journey to a goal none of us can quite foresee, a continual struggle for supremacy.

SENSATIONAL 'QUEEN MARY' NEWSREEL

POOR CUTTING MARS CRACK PHOTOGRAPHY

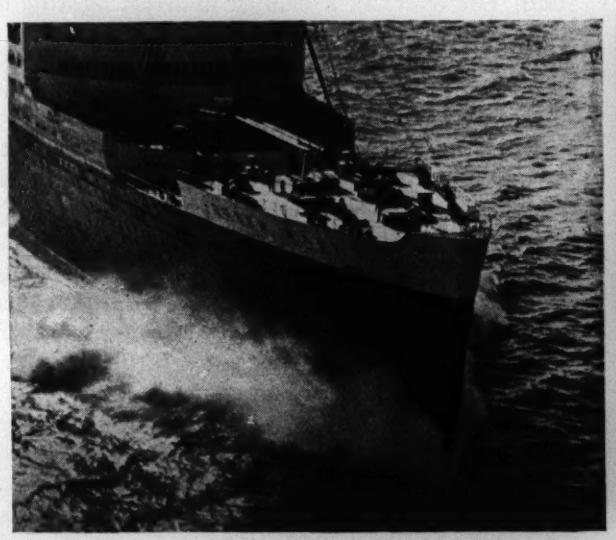
Cameramen: E. P. Genock, Jack Harding, Jim Gemmell, W. M. MacGregor

Paramount News is to be congratulated on their handling of the *Queen Mary* story. Rarely in a newsreel or anywhere else does one see shooting equal to Paramount's handling of the arrival of the ship in New York, and her subsequent trip home.

The Paramount people were evidently dazzled by their own powers of photography into treating the story, not so much from a snappy news angle, as from the more leisurely point of view of the realist school of films. They made a fine attempt to turn the berthing of the *Queen Mary* into a ceremonial procession up-river, building it up with all sorts of significant detail usually discarded by newsreel editors as irrelevant.

The shooting is magnificent, but next time Paramount tries this sort of thing, they should call in an expert cutter trained in documentary method. The newsreel cutters were obviously at sea once the news angle was subordinated to the wider theme, and the film is draggy, lacking a little in variety and poor in tempo. It should have pulled the audience out of their seats to applaud—but somehow it just failed. And it was not for lack of material.

This applies only to the first half of the subject—the arrival in New York. The reel ends with a series of photographs from the air of the *Queen Mary*, full steam ahead, crossing the Atlantic. These days one expects newsreel photography to be of a high order, but the photography of the *Queen Mary* stands head and shoulders above anything of its kind that has yet been seen.



The shooting is perfect in photographic quality, in scale and in camera movement—no mean feat when the subject was being covered from an aeroplane. The whole sequence is just a study of a big ship at speed, cut quite simply. The camera is in motion all the time, and the reel ends with a sensational, perfectly composed and unbroken shot taken while the aeroplane circles completely round the ship.

NEWSREEL CLIPS

The newsreel theatre moves northwards. Aberdeen is the latest town in the spread of its influence. It is to seat 400 people and building is in hand.

* * *

Norman Hulbert, M.P., chief of the largest newsreel theatre circuit, says he hopes the day will come when every town with a population of 50,000 or more, will have a newsreel theatre.

Film Societies Demand Better Films

This is the film societies' off-season, in so far as no performances are held during the summer months. For the officials it should be, and for many is, a period of intensive activity, planning for the ensuing season, viewing films, taking stock.

Most societies are satisfied with progress. Reports of increased membership, revenue and prestige are common, though some of the newer bodies have not yet reached calm waters and a balanced budget. What difficulties disturb the movement are mainly concerned with internal organisation.

Lack of co-operation between the provincial and Scottish societies and the Film Society of London makes the problem of obtaining suitable films for exhibition increasingly difficult for societies outside London.

Not so long ago almost any film shown at London's continental cinemas would have pleased provincial film society audiences. But to-day Miss Cohen and the Marquis de Casa Maury would find it a tougher job to cater for the critical Sunday afternoon audience of Newcastle or Wolverhampton than for London's West End.

It is a fact—and a wholesome and encouraging fact—that the majority of London's continental films are turned down or booked only as a last resort by most film societies. A few years ago the problem was to get an audience for good films: the problem now is to get films good enough for the audience.

Of the comparatively small number of foreign films which reach the top class many, for one reason or another, are not available for film society presentation.

In tackling this problem of film supply the closest possible co-operation is necessary between all societies to ensure (1) that all continental films brought into the country are made available to film societies if they desire them. (This may involve Quota difficulties and these, too, can only be overcome by combined effort.) (2) That where necessary films will be imported specially for the use of film societies. (3) That the personnel of the London Film Society and of the provincial and Scottish societies must work in closer collaboration and in harmony.

In a recent issue of *W.F.N.* Thorold Dickenson blamed the Federation of British Film Societies for not co-operating sufficiently with the London Society. If the Federation would guarantee to book solidly only four films per year, he declared, the burden of the London Society would be eased considerably. This is a most reasonable request to which all societies, it is certain, would be eager to accede *if they could get the films.* Actually requests for Film Society presentations are frequently met with a polite refusal, There may be good reasons for this, but to the uninitiated secretary in Manchester or Dundee it is decidedly mystifying to be asked for support and to have it refused.

At the recent Federation conference at Leicester there was every evidence of a very real desire to get together on a sound basis of co-operative activity. Without exception every society represented appeared not only willing but painfully anxious to get the machinery set in motion. If the proposals for co-operative booking and importation discussed and agreed upon at the conference, and now awaiting ratification by the member societies, are made effective most of the serious troubles of the officials should be at an end. Their energies would then be released for extending local propaganda activities and for concentrating on the growth of the movement in new spheres.

Apart from the question of film supply there is another aspect of film society activity, not discussed at Leicester, which calls for co-operative effort. That is the organisation of lectures by acknowledged authorities in creative cinema. A number of societies do organise lectures and even study courses, but independently and often under difficulties in obtaining speakers and paying for their expenses.

The Council of the Federation is obviously the appropriate body to co-ordinate arrangements in this field. The importance of this feature of propaganda is sufficient to warrant considerable widening in scope and extension to every society in the movement. It should not be an impossible task to form a panel of speakers and to organise lecture tours covering societies situated in convenient geographical groups—Southern, Midland, Northern, Scottish, etc.

Expense to individual societies would thus be reduced and responsible speakers would be more ready to undertake conveniently arranged lectures which would save time wasted in travelling. This is a matter which should come before the first meeting of the Council so that an experimental scheme can be prepared ready for the coming season. Societies which would welcome such a scheme should intimate their views and requirements to the Council at the first opportunity.

NEWS FROM THE BRANCHES

WOLVERHAMPTON'S FIRST YEAR

The first annual report of the Wolverhampton Film Society reports progress in spite of considerable difficulties. The local Watch Committee would not allow Sunday performances. Finances and membership have therefore been affected by having to rent an inferior theatre on week-nights.

Among feature films presented, Germany, Russia, France, America and Britain have been represented. "There can be no doubt," the report states, "that the first season of the Society will be remembered because of the wealth of documentary films shown. It is evident that in this direction Britain leads the world."

Three lectures—by Professor E. R. Dodds, John Barber and Stanley Hawes—have been given and a discussion group met regularly. Close contact is maintained with the neighbouring Film Society of Birmingham. The financial statement shows a small balance of cash on hand.

GLASGOW'S MIXED SEASON

The Glasgow Film Society reports a "mixty-maxty season." On the one side there have been the shorts—surely the best in the Society's history. On the other side there have been the features, some of which have been well below average.

"So consistently have we been told that the films we wanted were 'not available' that we have become almost resigned to these rebuffs." Certain of the films shown "would undoubtedly have been rejected" had others been obtainable.

Many members expressed considerable dissatisfaction with some of the presentations.

The final performance of the season included a selection of the historic films recently exhibited at the London Polytechnic.

OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED BELFAST SOCIETY

Strong opposition from the churches is being experienced in trying to form a film society in Belfast with plans to hold Sunday performances next winter.

The shows will be for members only but considerable difficulty is being experienced in getting the Corporation to consider licensing the Society. Sunday cinemas are banned in Belfast.

DOUBLE-FEATURE PROGRAMMES?

At its third annual general meeting the Merseyside Film Institute Society decided to hold an enquiry into "the practice of giving double-feature programmes in the cinemas."

It also decided to form an amateur film unit for the study and production of sub-standard films. The first work planned, mainly as an experiment, is on the subject of "Transport." A composite film will be produced largely from shots new and old supplied by members.

FILM CRITIC'S LECTURE COURSE AT LEICESTER

Leslie Cargill, film critic of the *Leicester Mercury*, has been giving members of the Leicester Film Society a lecture course on "How to Look at a Film." Similar courses are planned each season by the Leicester Society, which has the co-operation of the Vaughan College of Adult Education in organising this part of its work.

BIRMINGHAM FILM SOCIETY

In addition to a successful season of shows and lectures to members, arranged in conjunction with the Midland Adult School Union, two extra meetings were arranged when *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* was shown. W. H. Auden, the poet who has recently contributed verse to several G.P.O. productions, introduced a discussion. A lecture on the history and technique of the film was also given to a local girls' school.

CANADA ORGANISES

Lord Tweedsmuir is now Honorary President of the National Film Society of Canada. The President is Dr. Sydney Smith, head of Manitoba University. Lord Tweedsmuir was at one time Chairman of the Scottish Film Council.

The Society was formed a year ago for promoting the cultural aspects of cinema. It now has branches in Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa and Vancouver.

COCKAL

W.F.N.'s **aureole of birdseed goes this month to Daniel Frohman, dean of New York theatrical producers. He said:—**

"Shakespeare wrote long soliloquies and speeches in his plays for a good reason. There were about 9,000,000 people in Great Britain then and many of them could not read. They had to see the play and to hear the beauty of the poet's line spoken.

"Now we can all read, and in the plays we see we want action, movement, and not the story."

SAYINGS OF THE MONTH

"I WALKED INTO Joe Schenck's room unannounced, when something hit me straight in the eye."
—Viscount Castlerosse

"IS IT A heavy part? Of course it 'ud have to be altered. In pictures they've always got to alter—they've got to alter sumpin.'"
—Schnozzle Durante on "Cyrano"

"A MAN IN love is a stupid thing—he bores you stiff, in real life or anywhere else, but a woman in love is fascinating—she has a kind of aura." *—Leslie Howard*

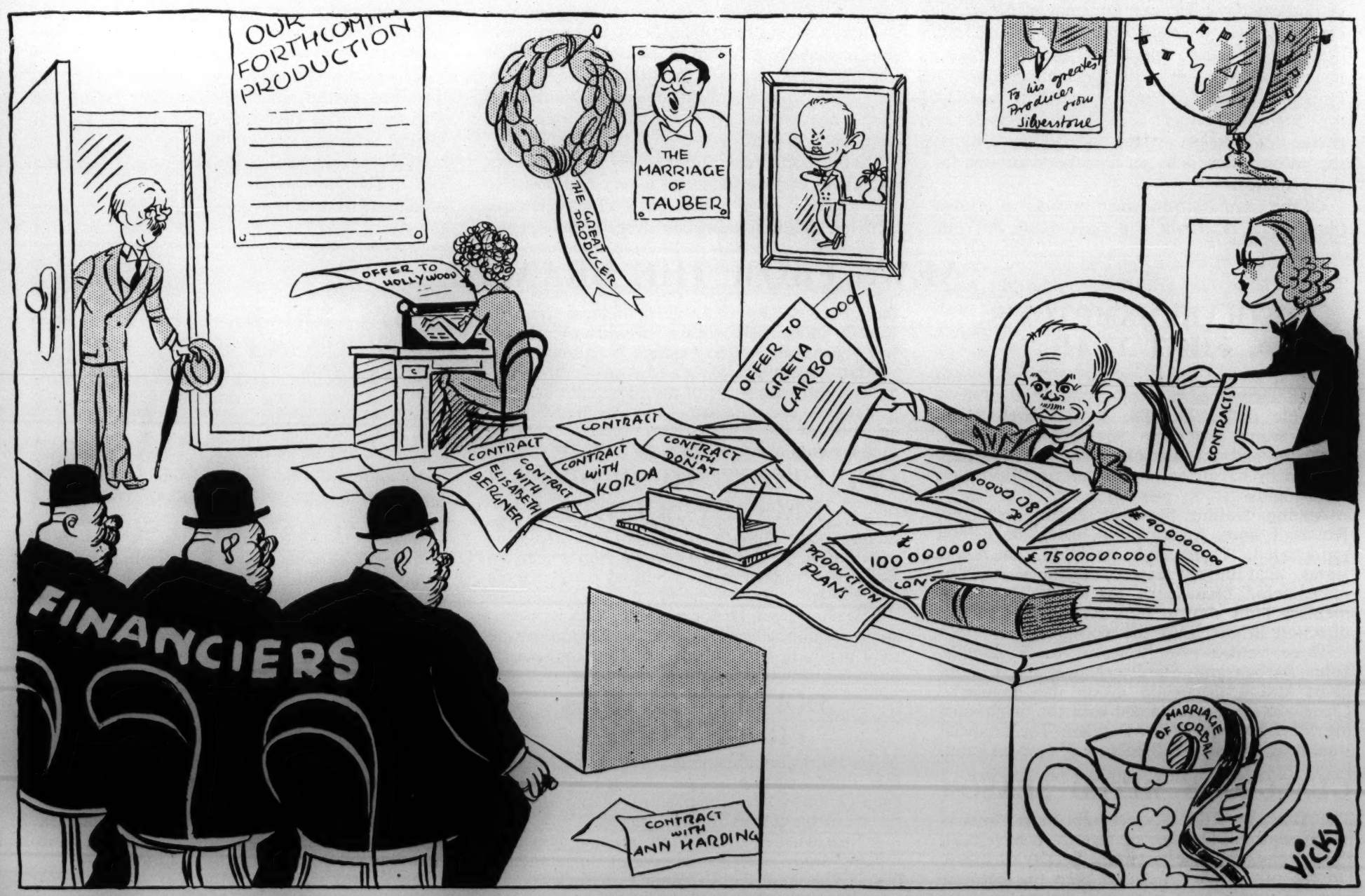
"I AM annoyed with Herbert Wilcox."
—Sydney Carroll

Fashion Note

Mary Carlisle has at last discovered a manner of arranging the back of her own hair.

She discovered a new gadget, a mirror that hangs about the shoulders on a tape, and extends upwards in the front. With this novel contraption it is possible to see the back of one's head—and make use of both hands while arranging it. Simple!

Even better is the simple gadget which enables you to do up your shoelaces without bending down. A system of hydraulic suspenders raises both legs to chin level at the touch of a button.



"ER . . . WHAT ARE YOUR PRODUCTION PLANS, MR. SCHACH?"

ORUM

"ARS GRATIA ARTIS"

Film Star Plans National Reconstruction

I have a horror of unpractical things, and, if I were a member of Parliament I would bring about a reform of a great many irritations in our daily life.

I believe that the little things of life are immensely important, and a constantly recurring irritant might develop into a public danger, influencing our lives far more than we imagine.

For instance, things like badly fitting doors; window catches that rattle in the breeze; cupboard doors which, when opened, sweep off the contents of the shelf immediately below; loud speakers which deliver more distortion than music. These things keep on niggling at us subconsciously and, who knows, may lead to the most awful consequences.

It would not surprise me in the least if medical science discovered that the degeneration of a nation could be traced back to squeaking boots!

ROBERT DONAT—In the *Star*

* * *

Jannings has received a signed photograph of Hitler for his performance in *Traumulus*.

(*Mr. Baldwin to note and take a look round the studios.*)

Jolly Ballad

ABOUT BRITISH FILMS

Sing hey! for forty novelists
At eighty pounds a week
And ho! for Spanish cameramen
Who cannot Eengleesh speak.

Hoch! Hoch! for German regisseurs
Zut! Zut! for French vedettes
(And shame on English carpenters—
They clutter up the sets).

So build another studio
And sign another star,
Announce another superfilm
And issue shares at par.

And throw a cocktail party
At a very large hotel,
Inviting all the journalists
And H. G. Wells as well.

Put out the flags in Wardour Street,
Unfurl the Union Jack,
God bless the British Studios
(And give John Jones the sack).

ENVOI

Princes, may gold Niagaras
Fall foaming in your laps,
And may you (later on) find time
To make a film—perhaps.

* * *

Professor Strunk, literary adviser to M.G.M. on *Romeo and Juliet*, was struck by resemblance between stars and famous characters of literature and mythology.

He got together with Cukor, and made a list:

Norma Shearer=Evangeline, Longfellow's beloved heroine.

Clark Gable=Galahad, the knight in shining armour who carries off young ladies on a white charger in their dreams.

Leslie Howard=Shelley.

Lionel Barrymore=Rembrandt—he etched and painted, too.

Jean Harlow=Venus of the Golden Tresses.

You're behind the times, Professor Strunk. Our British producers have been doing it for years. They realised full well that Charles Laughton=Henry VIII (or was it Rembrandt?), Anna Neagle=Nell Gwyn (sometimes known as Peg of Old Drury), Cedric Hardwicke=Charles I (Theotokopulos to his friends), and last but not least, Jessie Matthews=Jessie Matthews.

In connection with the exhibition of Surrealist pictures at the Burlington Galleries, enthusiasts proposed showings of Surrealist films *Le chien Andalou*, *L'age d'or*, etc. All arrangements were made this side of the Channel when news came across that no copy of *L'age d'or* could be found. The Catholic Church black-listed this picture and the last print was confiscated by the Teneriffe religious heads during a demonstration of Surrealism. The Vicomte de Noailles, financial sponsor, owns the negative, but as Catholic and Royalist, dare not have it shown for fear of excommunication.

Le chien Andalou has already been withdrawn from circulation only a few weeks ago. Luis Bunuel, its director, having turned orthodox communist, now repudiates it, and has rounded up all negs. and prints.

All the real Surrealist films are, of course, banned by the Surrealists.

* * *

Dave Robson says:—

I Discovered Stereoscopy

About eight years ago I startled the whole cinema world through the medium of an article published in the late trade journal, *The Bioscope*. Further, I substantiated my claims in practice, and proved that without the use of any additional apparatus whatsoever, I could provide the natural stereoscopic result at a cost not exceeding 4*d*. per head.

It was due to an accident that the discovery was made, and it happened this way.

As usual, I had departed from my projection duties for a brief rest and refreshment in the Plaza Arms, a nearby inn, and due to a cold snap was persuaded to partake of a certain beverage, stout. Now, as I will prove later, this stout had certain stereoscopic properties, which affected the eyes. Unlike common inebriation in which the liver gets definitely out of sync. with the optics, this particular stout dilated the pupils in a dichromatic fashion due to a chemical reaction set up in the blood stream, causing the pupils to pulsate in harmony and colour. On returning to the projection room I was positively thunderstruck at the amazing results; sure enough the projected picture stood out in bold relief. My assistants looked upon me with some suspicion following my outbursts, and not until such time as they too had partaken of this beverage, did they wholeheartedly agree.

Exhibitors far and wide made applications to the Justices for the necessary bar licence but this was refused, with the net result—another good scheme to popularise the movies went wrong!

FILM GUIDE

In this new feature we do not tell you what films you ought to see. We mean to help those who have difficulty in finding the films they want to see, either because they are seldom shown or because they are not always listed in ordinary press notices. Readers will appreciate that this service is not an easy one to maintain. The indifference of some film companies to specialised films prevents this service from being as comprehensive and accurate as we would wish.

SHORTS

The Birth of the Robot (Coloured puppet film)
DIRECTION: Humphrey Jennings and Len Lye. PRODUCTION: Gasparcolor, for Shell. DISTRIBUTION: Gasparcolor.
LONDON: Tatler News Theatre, Charing Cross Road — July 6–11

Carmen (Colour cartoon)
DIRECTION: Anson Dyer. DISTRIBUTION: Reunion.
LONDON: Tatler News Theatre, Charing Cross Road — July 27–Aug. 1

Citizens of the Future
DIRECTION: Donald Taylor. PRODUCTION: Strand Films & G.B.I. DISTRIBUTION: G.B.D.
EDINBURGH: Monseigneur — July 23–25
The new education, from Infant to Senior Schools.

Coal Face
PRODUCTION: G.P.O. DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
LEEDS: Queens — July 16–18
LONDON: Monseigneur, Strand — July 6–11
A documentary of the British coal industry, notable for its experimental sound bands.

Eriskay
DIRECTION and PRODUCTION: Dr. Hans Kissling. DISTRIBUTION: Zenifilms.
LONDON: Forum Cinema, Villiers Street — July 19–25

The Face of Britain
DIRECTION: Paul Rotha. PRODUCTION: G.B.I. DISTRIBUTION: G.B.D.
LONDON: Monseigneur News Theatre, Piccadilly — July 27–Aug. 1
Hydro-electric power supersedes coal and the face of Britain can once again be clean.

For All Eternity
PRODUCTION: Strand Films. DIRECTOR: Marion Grierson. DISTRIBUTION: M.G.M.
LONDON: Tatler News Theatre, Charing Cross Road — July 6–11

Gentlemen in Top Hats and Gentlemen in Crowns
PRODUCTION: A B. Svensk Filmindustri. ENGLISH PREPARATION: Donald Taylor. DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
LONDON: Tatler News Theatre, Charing Cross Road — July 20–25
A retrospect of European events for the last 40 years, including very early news-reel work.

Great Cargoes
DIRECTION: Paul Rotha. PRODUCTION: G.B.I. DISTRIBUTION: G.B.D.
LONDON: Monseigneur News Theatre, Piccadilly — July 13–15
Monseigneur News Theatre, Strand — July 13–15
Sphere News Theatre, Tottenham Court Road — July 13–15

Dragon of Wales
DIRECTION: W. B. Pollard. DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
A travelogue which attempts to tackle economic conditions.
LONDON: Piccadilly News Theatre, Great Windmill Street — July 2–5
Monseigneur News Theatre, Piccadilly — July 23–25
Monseigneur News Theatre, Strand — July 23–25
LIVERPOOL: Gaumont Palace — July 16–18
Corona — July 30–Aug. 2
MANCHESTER: Tatler — July 6–11

SHORTS

Leave it to John (Carton and Cinecolour)
DRAWN BY: Ub Iwerks, Celebrity Films. PRODUCTION: Revelation Films for "Boots." DISTRIBUTION: Revelation Films.
LONDON: Imperial Cinema, Edgware Road — July 6–11
News Theatre, Waterloo Station — July 6–8
Worlds News Theatre, Praed Street — July 9–11
Royal Court Theatre, Sloane Square — July 6–11
Everyman Theatre, Hampstead — July 6–11
Eros News Theatre, Piccadilly Circus — July 13–15
News Theatre, Victoria Station — July 19–22
Cameo News Theatre, Charing Cross Road — July 27–29
BIRMINGHAM: Warwick Cinema, Acocks Green — July 6–11
Warley Theatre — July 27–Aug. 1
BRISTOL: Hippodrome — July 13–18
His Majesty's — July 20–22
LEEDS: Capitol, Meanwood — July 13–18
Town Picture House — July 20–25
Shaftesbury — July 27–Aug. 1
LEICESTER: Trocadero — July 6–11
Westleigh — July 23–25
Evington — July 27–29
LIVERPOOL: Tatler News Theatre — July 15–18
MANCHESTER: Scala — July 20–25
Regent Super — July 27–Aug. 1

Metropolitan Nocturne
DISTRIBUTION: Radio.
LONDON: Everyman Theatre, Hampstead — July 6–12
"*Avant-garde.*"

March of Time
PRODUCTION: Editors of "Time." DISTRIBUTION: Radio.
Dynamic Journalism.
LONDON: **No. 6** Classic Cinema, Chelsea — July 12–15
No. 7 Classic Cinema, Chelsea — July 26–28
Grand Cinema, Edgware Road — July 27–Aug. 1
No. 8 Blue Hall, Edgware Road — June 29–July 4
BIRMINGHAM: **No. 8** Lozells — July 13–15
BRISTOL: **No. 8** Globe Cinema — July 27–29
GLASGOW: **No. 7** Orient — June 29–July 4
No. 8 Cranston's — June 29–July 4
Orient — July 27–29
LEICESTER: **No. 7** Carlton — July 18
Evington — July 8
Westleigh — July 11
Knighton — July 15
No. 8 Palace — July 22
LIVERPOOL: **No. 5** Picture Playhouse — July 16–18
No. 6 Palladium — July 2–4
No. 7 Capitol — July 9–11
Princess — July 6–8
Derby — July 23–25
Palladium — July 30–Aug. 1
No. 8 Tatler — July 6–11
King's — July 23–25
Garrick — July 13–15
Princes — July 20–22
NEWCASTLE: **No. 7** Gaiety — July 23–25

FILM GUIDE (continued)

SHORTS

Night Mail

DIRECTION: Basil Wright and Harry Watt. PRODUCTION: G.P.O. Unit.
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.

LONDON: Palace, Kilburn	July 6–8
LIVERPOOL: Carlton	July 30–Aug. 1
Granada (Dovecot)	July 30–Aug. 1
MIDDLESBROUGH: Grand Electric	July 6–8
STAFFORD: Picture House	July 30–Aug. 1
BATH: Little Theatre	July 30–Aug. 1
BRISTOL: Triangle	July 27–Aug. 1
Empire	July 27–Aug. 1
DUNDEE: Palace	July 23–25
Plaza	July 23–25
BURTON-ON-TRENT: Regent	July 16–18
IPSWICH: Hippodrome	July 20–25
LLANDUDNO: Savoy	July 13–15
WHITBY: Palace	July 9–11
SWINDON: Regent	July 6–11
WEST BROMWICH: Tower	July 27–Aug. 1
WALSALL: Her Majesty's	July 20–25

The north-bound Postal Special. Some commentary is in verse by W. H. Auden.

On the Fishing Banks of Skye

PRODUCTION: EMPO. DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
LONDON: World News Theatre, Praed Street July 23–25

Progress

PRODUCTION: G.B.I. DISTRIBUTION: G.B.D.

LONDON: Sphere News Theatre, Tottenham Court Road	July 6–8
Piccadilly News Theatre, Great Windmill Street	July 16–18
GLASGOW: Cambridge	July 27–29

The development of communications made in co-operation with the National Physical Laboratory.

"Secrets of Life" Series

EDITING: Mary Field. TECHNICAL SUPERVISION: Percy Smith. PRODUCTION: G.B.I. DISTRIBUTION: G.B.D.

Imaginative descriptions of natural processes.

We Are Seven

LONDON: Sphere News Theatre, Tottenham Court Road July 13–15

Butterflies and Nettles

LONDON: Sphere News Theatre, Tottenham Court Road July 20–22

Mixed Bathing

LONDON: Piccadilly News Theatre, Great Windmill Street July 6–8

Home from the South

LONDON: Piccadilly News Theatre, Great Windmill Street July 23–25

Shipyard

DIRECTION: Paul Rotha. PRODUCTION: G.B.I. DISTRIBUTION: G.B.D.

LONDON: Monseigneur News Theatre, Piccadilly	July 20–22
Strand News Theatre, Agar Street	July 27–29
EDINBURGH: Monseigneur	July 16–18
SOUTHAMPTON: Picture House	July 26–Aug. 1

The building and launching of the liner, "Orion."

Spring on the Farm

DIRECTION: Evelyn Spice. PRODUCTION: E.M.B. Unit. DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
LIVERPOOL: Casino July 22

This was England

DIRECTION: Mary Field. PRODUCTION: G.B.I. DISTRIBUTION: G.B.D.
SOUTHAMPTON: Picture House July 5–11

A Suffolk documentary.

The World Rolls On.

PRODUCTION: Publicity Films Ltd. DIRECTION: Ralph Smart

Latest film produced for the Dunlop Rubber Co. It traces the history of the wheel, and the direct selling angle has been entirely ignored.

LEICESTER: Carlton Cinema, Gipsy Lane	July 2–4
Westleigh Kinema, Fosse Road South, Westleigh	July 2–4
BIRMINGHAM: Odeon, Birchfield Road, Perry Barr	June 29–July 4
BRISTOL: Embassy, Queens Avenue, Clifton	July 6–11

Wheatlands of East Anglia

DIRECTION: Mary Field. PRODUCTION: G.B.I. DISTRIBUTION: G.B.D.
LONDON: News Theatre, Victoria Station July 23–25

BRITISH FEATURE FILM

The Turn of the Tide

DIRECTION: Norman Walker. STARRING: John Garrick and Joan Maude.
DISTRIBUTION: G.B.D.

LEEDS: Rialto	July 13–18
LEICESTER: Aylestone	July 20–25
Belgrave	July 6–8
Tudor	July 9–11
MANCHESTER: Regent, Fallowfield	July 6–11

FOREIGN FILMS

La Dame Aux Camellias (French)

DIRECTION: Fernand Rivers. STARRING: Yvonne Printemps. DISTRIBUTION: Exclusive Films.
LONDON: Forum, Villiers Street July 12–18

La Maternelle (French)

DIRECTION: Jean Benoit-Levy. DISTRIBUTION: Universal.
LONDON: Everyman, Hampstead June 29–July 1

Child psychology.

Letzte Rose (German)

STARRING: Helge Roswaenge (Tenor). DISTRIBUTION: Tobis.
LONDON: Studio One, Oxford Street June 11–July

From Flotow's "Martha."

The Phantom Gondola (French)

DIRECTION: Augusto Genina. DISTRIBUTION: Film Export. STARRING: Marcelle Chantal.
LONDON: Curzon Cinema, Curzon Street June 23–July

From the novel by Dekobra

Remous (French)

DIRECTION: Edmond Greville. DISTRIBUTION: Denning.
LONDON: Everyman, Hampstead July 2–5

Sans Famille (French)

STARRING: Robert Lynen. DISTRIBUTION: Reunion.
LONDON: Everyman, Hampstead July 13–19

Savoy Hotel 217 (German)

DIRECTION: Gustav Ucicky. STARRING: Hans Albers. DISTRIBUTION: Ufa.
LONDON: Curzon Cinema, Curzon Street

Following "Phantom Gondola."

The Student of Prague (German)

DIRECTION: Arthur Robison. STARRING: Adolf Wohlbruck, Dorothea Wieck. DISTRIBUTION: Denning.
LONDON: Everyman Theatre, Hampstead July 6–12

We are the Foreign Press

The author of this article is a well-known Hollywood Journalist. For obvious reasons he wishes to remain anonymous.

"The work of a representative of an English film paper in Hollywood, sounds like 'jam.' World-famous stars and studios are within easy reach—he has only to write the stuff. *You* try it for a change.

"I know an English newspaperman in Hollywood who was commissioned to get an interview with a certain leading star. Despite continual applications at the studio he was kept waiting for just over a month. Yet the star was in the studio every day. Another English representative wanted good stills of a new film for a special feature. The only ones he was allowed to see were in a batch that had already been picked over by American journalists. The same man had a good story which the studio refused to allow to be published. Yet the same story appeared in an American newspaper a few days later.

"It is to combat such evils that the Foreign Press Society has recently been formed. Its aim is to get better treatment for 'The Foreign Press.'

"In this country we are apt to think that our film papers are pretty important, and that, as they are written in the English language, they mean something in Hollywood, too. The fact is that, by Hollywood studios, they are classed with publications from France, Germany, Czecho-Slovakia and anywhere else you like outside the United States, under the general heading, 'The Foreign Press.' And 'The Foreign Press' means nearly nothing to Hollywood.

"The reason for this disregard of non-American papers is, I believe, that, to a Hollywood studio official, 'Publicity' means something that he himself can *see*. He can buy *Photoplay*, *Motion Picture Classic* and others on almost any news-stand. An M.G.M. man sees a copy with Joan Crawford on the cover; a Paramount man sees Dietrich smiling at the world; another opens an American publication and notes with satisfaction that his newest star is giving cooking lessons. Good publicity.

"Now consider *Film Weekly*, *Picturegoer*, *Film Pictorial*, *Picture Show* or *World Film News*. Only on one or two specialised news-stands in New York or Hollywood will he ever see these, If he subscribes to them his secretary probably disposes of them with slick American efficiency. The papers exist to him as vague 'Foreign' publications.

"Consequently, 'Foreign' representatives are scarcely considered. Let us hope that the Foreign Press Society will succeed in impressing on studios that 'the Foreign Press,' although it may not appear on the news-stands of America, is read by millions of prospective film-goers in other countries."

Film Society Officials Go Professional

Experience in film society work seems to be a useful preliminary to entering cinema professionally. If the ideals which have inspired the film societies movement are thereby carried into the trade these new recruits may be able to assert their influence better from the inside than from the outside.

Among recent "transfers" are:

Stanley Russell, joint secretary of the Scottish Film Council and secretary of the Glasgow Meteor Film Producing Society, who has entered production as director of the new *Scottish Newsreel*.

S. J. C. Watsham, organiser of the Maidenhead Film Society, who becomes director of the Empire Theatre, Windsor.

Cyril Ray, assistant secretary of the Merseyside Film Institute Society, now manager of the Tatler News Theatre, Manchester.

Stanley Hawes, formerly secretary of the Birmingham Film Society, is now producing with Strand Films.

J. S. Fairfax-Jones, director of the Everyman, Hampstead, and of Denning Films, Ltd., distributors of Continental films, was for many years secretary of the Southampton Film Society.

Gaumont-British will shortly add to its staff a well-known official of the Aberdeen Film Society.

Producers take Note!

London is changing so rapidly from an 18th and 19th century city to a 20th, that film companies will have to hurry to make authentic records of characteristic corners and buildings before they are condemned and demolished. If a Library of such material is not collected and properly documented, research departments will have a difficult time in the future, to reconstruct correctly the face of London to-day. Who remembers exactly what Regent Street, Piccadilly Circus, Park Lane, looked like a few years ago? Yet the change has come in our own life time. Adelphi Terrace is being destroyed, Carlton House Terrace is threatened, large blocks of flats go up in place of 18th century houses. The aspect of London is being altered so quickly that film companies could do a work of national historic importance by recording these changes.

March of Time in Scotland

Mr. Richard de Rochemont, European editor of *March of Time*, announces that an item dealing with Scotland will be included in an early issue. This item will not be concerned with kilts and bagpipes but will deal with the tougher problems of industry.

New Group Activity

The Group Theatre announces a film section, called *Film Group*, which will be started in September.

Its aims are practical, and its curriculum includes classes on film production, lectures, demonstrations, and film shows. Later, the production of shorts is envisaged.

Film Group will be under the directon of Basil Wright and Rupert Doone.

Film Jargon worries

ADRIAN BRUNEL

After some years of existence as an art or a craft, film-making has evolved a tolerably understandable terminology of its technique, although some of the words we use are preposterous inventions. *Title* is one, though it might have been worse had we adopted the peculiar synonym I discovered in a script submitted to me some time ago by "A Yorkshire Mother"—she called each one of her voluble captions a *snippet*. Such words as **Blimp*, †*Dolly* and ‡*Gobo* sound more like a comic strip than technical expressions, but I suppose we must accept them and derive some comfort from the fact that *blimps* are seldom used nowadays, *trolly* and *track* are replacing the use of the word *dolly*, and the *nigger* is ousting his first cousin the *gobo*.

In my book "Filmcraft" I tried to explain and record the principal expressions used in the cutting-room, in script-writing, and in shooting a film. In my Glossary I have attempted to fix a definition of our technical jargon, though I admit that this can only be temporary, for I remember the words of my favourite American author, Ambrose Bierce, when he defined a dictionary as "an ingenious instrument for crippling a language."

There are still a number of words and expressions, not necessarily technical, that worry me. For instance—*amateur*. I have been accused of writing for the amateur, as if it were a sin, though in my recent book "Film Production" I was at some pains to introduce the word *student* as a substitute. Actually I did not write exclusively for the amateur or student, though it may be tactful to appear to do so when one is trying to drag the professional into a discussion. But we need a new word to differentiate between the rank amateur and the expert student. I am not certain of the precise significance of the word *cinéaste*, but I would not recommend its use in English, as I recall the fate of *montage* when it was adopted in England.

Unfortunately, my dictionary of synonyms is no help. Looking up *amateur*, I am first referred to "Unskilfulness," where I find "incompetence, clumsiness, quackery, mismanagement, bungling and too many cooks," which might just as well be applied to professionals, even if we do not insert an "r" in the last word. I am next referred to "desire," and all the help I get here is "lover, devotee, aspirant, solicitant, candidate, cormorant and sychophant."

What are we to do about it? *Filmcraftsman* is cumbersome and too arty; *ciné-technician* sounds too mechanical and is not sufficiently arty. Perhaps the gentleman who invented *Gobo* will supply the missing word.

* Camera cover used to keep camera silent lined with absorbent cork or rubber.

† A four-wheeled truck used for making tracking shots where the camera moves in or out of a scene.

‡ A blackboard used to prevent a lamp shining in certain directions.